

# THE LONDON READER

of Literature, Science, Art, and General Information.

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No. 1196.—VOL. XLVI.]

FOR THE WEEK ENDING APRIL 3, 1886.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.]



[A GOOD STROKE OF BUSINESS FOR MR. DE MORTIMER.]

## A FLOWER OF FATE.

### CHAPTER I.

"We must put up the card again, Amy."

Amy Watson rose from her sewing, and went to a shelf in the small back-parlour.

"I think it does good, don't you?" went on her mother, as the girl approached with a large white card, "apartment" printed on it in good-sized letters.

Amy sighed.

"I suppose it does; but so few people seem to come down our street."

Mrs. Watson's thin hands trembled; there was a quiver in her voice as she replied,—

"Never mind, darling; put it up. We can but pray and hope."

Amy mounted on a chair, and put the card in the window; then sat down again to her sewing.

"How far have you got, mother?" she asked, cheerily.

Mrs. Watson looked down at the yards of quilting that lay on the ground.

"Nearly to the end, dear," she answered, patiently.

Amy worked on in silence; the only sound was the buzz and burr of the sewing-machine used by Mrs. Watson. The girl's small fingers were toiling on swiftly.

"Amy," said Mrs. Watson, after a pause, "Tom has not written for a fortnight."

"Oh! he is busy, no doubt."

Mrs. Watson sighed.

"Too busy to write to his mother!" she said, slowly.

An expression of pain flitted across the girl's sweet face.

"Dearest," she said, gently, "we live in this quiet village, and an hour seems a day; but Tom is in the city, and there, you know, hours seem minutes, there is so much to do. We shall have a letter to-morrow, I expect."

How patient she was! how good! Poor Amy Watson!—not yet twenty, and doomed to a life of self-sacrifice and labour!

Sometimes she was tempted to envy other girls as they passed the window, laughing and gay, while she sat toiling, toiling to keep her

mother in comfort and the little home together.

"Amy Watson," the neighbours would cry, "poor stupid thing! always working, never walking or playing. Why can't she be sociable? Stuck up, I suppose, because her father was a parson; and her brother must needs be a fine gentleman!"

Amy guessed a little at what passed through their minds, but she heeded it not. She was a lady born and bred. Even had times been easier she would never have made great friends with her neighbours, for their vulgarity jarred, and their method of life ill-suited her. She was proud, but it was not false pride that lived in her heart.

Mrs. Watson moaned loudly about the indignity of coming down to dressmaking and letting apartments—she, the daughter of a naval captain, the widow of the Rev. Arthur Watson.

But the Christian spirit of her dead father lived in Amy's heart. She was ever cheerful, resigned, industrious, and her work brought good results. Her dainty sewing was appreciated by all the women around, and an occa-

sional commercial traveller occupied their best bedroom for a few nights together.

One thing alone troubled Amy—her brother Tom, handsome, good-natured, luxurious Tom. But the trouble was looked in her breast, and from her lips came nothing but love, excuses, admiration.

The Watsons lived in the small village of Bentley, where the Rev. Arthur had officiated as curate on a miserable stipend; and here, after his death, his widow and daughter elected to remain, only moving from the more comfortable home to this small dwelling.

It was autumn time, the days were dark now at an early hour, and Amy, after sewing away for some time, chatting as easily as she could to her mother, rose and lit the gas, not without a little sigh over the expense.

But work had to be finished; and after laying the tea things on the table, and putting the kettle to boil, Amy sat down again to the gown which she had promised for the following afternoon.

While the mother and daughter were sitting thus they heard the sound of voices out in the street, and the tramp of feet.

"Strangers!" said Amy, instantly, "no one in Bentley has a voice like that—listen, mother."

As she spoke a sweet, clear, strong girl's voice, rang out on the quiet evening air, singing the verse of some well-known song apparently for a chorus of other voices chimed in at the end.

"What a sweet singer!" exclaimed Amy, for once forgetting her work, rising to listen. The second verse was sung just outside their window. Amy tried to peer into the gloom, but could only see a muffled-looking cluster of people.

"What can it be, Amy?" cried Mrs. Watson. "It is not Noted fair?"

"No. Hush, mother, we can hear them talking."

Amy sat down, and began her sewing again. Outside the group had apparently come to a standstill.

"I can go no further!" said a man's voice. "Nor I," chimed in another.

"Poor fragile creatures!" cried the girl's voice that had just ceased singing. "Why, we're worth twenty of them—aren't we, Vera?"

"Let Vera alone. She's fast asleep on a doorstep," laughed the first speaker.

"Is she?" retorted the girl. "More like she is dragging your great bag along somehow, Mr. Nathaniel de Mortimer."

"Do her good, too," Amy heard Mr. Nathaniel de Mortimer declare.

"Light you, brute!" exclaimed the girl. "But, here, we can't stand on this spot for ever. Show begins at eight, you know. I'm going to look for a roof to cover my head."

"You won't have far to look," observed another voice. "Turn round—there's a card in the window."

"So there is!" declared the girl. "Well, you fellows can go on higher; this is my roof, unless they are too ruinous—ta, ta!"

"Will you take Vera?" asked Mr. de Mortimer.

"Will I take Vera!" repeated the girl, scoffingly. "If I don't who will? Answer me that, Mr. Nathaniel."

She rapped sharply at Mrs. Watson's door as she spoke.

Amy let her sewing slip to the floor.

"Mother they want to come here. What shall we do?"

"We can't take anyone who is not quite respectable, Amy," Mrs. Watson answered, nervously.

Amy nodded, and went to open the door. A slender, graceful form stood on the step. It was almost too dark to see the face, but Amy felt instinctively that it was of extraordinary charm—probably a match to the voice that now sunk into conventionalism addressed her.

"You have apartments to let?"

"Yes, madam," answered Amy.

"Can I see them? I want a bedroom, with a good-sized bed or two small ones; and if you have a sitting-room—"

"We have," answered Amy again, and still she hesitated.

The stranger on the doorstep had a better view of Amy than Amy had of her. She noted in an instant the ladylike exterior, and the gentle bearing.

"Perhaps I ought to tell you first who I am," said the stranger, frankly. "I am Miss Marguerite Delane, the prima donna of a small operatic company that is about to give a week's performance in the villages scattered about here. I have also a younger member of the company with me called Miss Vera de Mortimer. Now, if you have the smallest objection to taking in two actresses, pray say so, and at the same time oblige me by telling me where I could get a bed for the night."

Amy hesitated no longer; Miss Delane's frankness was to her liking.

"We have never taken in any of your profession before, but I am quite sure if we are mutually agreed about the rooms you will be a good recommendation for any that may come."

Miss Delane laughed musically.

"You are very, very kind," she said. "Now may I see the rooms, and know the price, if you please?"

In a very few minutes the two girls had recognised the dainty, humble apartments, and all was settled.

"Now, if you get me some tea very quickly I will call in my friend. Poor child, she has dropped down on a doorstep with fatigue. I should think we have marched miles to-day."

Marguerite Delane ran down the stairs and out into the street, while Amy joined her mother.

"Actresses, Amy!" cried Mrs. Watson, in horror, when alone. "My dear, it cannot be. Think of our position. What will the neighbours say? Your father—"

"Dearest, have you forgotten when the travelling circus came round years ago, how father took the clown, poor creature, into our house and nursed him? We have our rent to meet; it may be months before anyone comes to Bentley and wants rooms. The money they pay will help us considerably. You need a rest, and with this assistance I can relieve you of your share of sewing. Besides, I liked her face, mother, and I admired her truthfulness."

"You know best, dear," sighed Mrs. Watson.

Amy kissed her mother.

"Now to make tea. The kettle boils, and here they are."

"Our luggage we will bring back with us to-night from the hall, Miss Watson," Miss Delane observed, as she passed through the narrow hall, half supporting a young figure with her arm.

"This is my friend, Vera—Vera of the golden looks I call her, but she is so sleepy. Good thing she isn't to-night! Ah! I can smell the tea. How nice. Don't fuss yourself too much; I'm used to roughing it."

She passed on up the stairs, and Amy busied herself in making some toast, feeling still dazed and delighted at the good news that the rooms were taken. When she carried the tea upstairs she found Vera stretched on the sofa, covered with a shawl, fast asleep, and Miss Delane with her hat tossed off; her fingers buried in her short, dark, clustering hair, conning to herself from a roll of paper.

"My lines for to-night," she said, with a laugh. "I'm up in the music, but the words do bother me. It isn't far back to the hall, that's one thing. It is only just seven o'clock, isn't it?"

"That's all." Amy put the teatray down and knelt down and lit the fire, while the other hastily poured out some tea and mumbled away at her words.

"Won't you wake her?" asked Amy, glancing at the tired form on the sofa.

"Yes, in a few minutes. But I wish you would just give her a look up once or so during the evening. I am afraid she isn't strong."

"Poor thing!" said Amy, sympathetically. "Is she your sister?"

Miss Delane shook her head vigorously.

"Lor! no, my dear!" she answered. "I wish she was; she shouldn't be in this life much longer, I can tell you. She's De Mortimer's child, our baritone. A beast I call him, but I'm what you call plain-spoken."

Amy smiled.

"Why does she not go to her father?" she asked.

"Because she's better off where she is. He simply starves her, I believe. Anyhow, as long as I am in the company I mean to look after her—De Mortimer or no De Mortimer."

"That is very good of you," Amy observed, softly.

"It's no more than you would do, anyhow," answered Miss Delane, promptly. "I've grown fond of the girl. I wish I could get her away from De Mortimer altogether, but he's too cute. She's got the sweetest voice you ever heard; and with her beauty, too, he'll just coin money."

"It sounds horrible for a father to only think of making money out of his child."

"Yes, I suppose it does to you; but I'm used to it. I've been turned to account, figuratively speaking, ever since I could remember; but then I'm born to the trade. I believe I was cradled in an old drum and fed on properties."

"And you aren't very old."

Amy smiled.

"No; I'm somewhere about twenty, but lor, at times I feel a hundred; that's when I get the blues, but it isn't often."

"You would like some supper when you come home, Miss Delane, I suppose?"

"Yes, but don't trouble. Anything will do. There's Vera's waking up. Come along, dear, such a nice cup of tea; do you all the good in the world!"

The girl shook aside the shawl and shawl and got up to her feet.

Amy could scarcely repress a exclamation of surprise and admiration as she beheld the beauty of the young creature before her. Miss Delane had seemed a resolution to her, but before Vera's loveliness she stood amazed.

A frail, slender form, a head weighted with a great coil of red golden hair, a cream white skin out of which the tired red lips looked as if touched by a cherry. The eyes at first seemed black, but at a second glance Amy saw they were violet grey, of most extraordinary beauty, and fringed with lashes so thick and heavy, as almost to seem from a distance a smudge of dark powder.

"This is my friend, Vera," introduced Miss Delane, taking in with a gratified air the admiration excited in Amy's breast. "And she is not very strong; are you, Vera?"

"No," almost whispered the girl, wearily, as she dropped into a chair by the table, "not very."

"Yes, she had a bag to carry almost as big as herself; it belonged to her dear parent," vouchsafed Miss Delane to Amy. Vera suddenly looked round with almost a timid air.

"Is—is father coming here?" she asked.

"What do you think, my dear?" Miss Delane answered, placidly. "Maggie Delane knows a thing or two; she don't choose rooms in the same house as Nathaniel de Mortimer, if she knows it—not much!"

"When Miss De Mortimer wants me," said Amy, with difficulty repressing a smile, "I will come."

"Call me Vera," said the young girl, quickly, "I hate the other name."

"But it sounds good in the bill, my dear, don't forget that; and now, chickabiddy, I'm off. Go to bed; remember you've got a call in the morning and a show at night; that will be enough for you, I expect."

The good-natured Miss Delane put on her



hat, swallowed another cup of tea, kissed the girl, and departed.

An hour passed, then Amy crept upstairs; she opened the door, and found Vera in exactly the same position as she had been in when the other left.

"Come to bed, dear," said Amy, gently. "I will show you the way."

"I can't go till Maggie comes," answered Vera, lifting her head. "She has all my things. How kind you are, thank you so much."

Urged by a look of lonely longing on the beautiful young face, Amy bent over her tenderly, and smoothing back the golden glory of hair, pressed a kiss on the white brow.

## CHAPTER II.

EARLY the next morning, as Amy was putting some finishing touches to her work, a tap came to the door.

It was Miss Delane.

"I am going to ask a favour," she said. "I noticed last night that you have a piano in your back room. Would your mother permit us to use it? Vera has to sing a long part to-night, and really wants a good hour's practice. Of course," added the actress off-hand, "it will be understood that this is an extra."

Amy blushed.

"The piano is very old," she said, simply, "but you are at perfect liberty to use it. Mother has gone out marketing; she will not be in for some time, so you will not disturb her."

"Don't you play or sing?" asked the other, walking into the next room and opening the old-fashioned lid. Amy sighed.

"I used long ago, but now I have no time. But do sing, you have a lovely voice, I heard it last night; it will be such a treat!"

Miss Delane looked pleased. She was not quite so pretty seen by daylight; but although her skin was a trifle sallow and her locks untidy, the same spirit of good-nature and kindness beamed from her large brown eyes.

"You shall hear Vera—she will astonish you," she observed.

"How is she this morning?" asked Amy.

"As fresh as a lark. She has youth, you see, and a good night's sleep is the best medicine for weary limbs."

Marguerite Delane went to the bottom of the stairs, and called "Vera."

"Leave the door open," pleaded Amy, as she took up her work; "the music will be like heaven to me."

In a few seconds Vera came down; she smiled as she saw Amy, and without any ado went up to her, and kissed her.

The girl wore a shabby black gown, drawn in at the waist with a band. Her magnificent hair was plaited in two thick plaits, and hung over the slender shoulders.

In contradistinction to her friend, Vera looked sweeter and younger by daylight. To Amy's eyes, so long accustomed to the plebeian good looks of the neighbourhood, there was something marvellous in the girl's beauty, and a strange wistful, sadness in the great violet eyes that appealed to her womanly tenderness.

"Now, Vera, sing out," commanded Miss Delane.

Vera obeyed. Standing straight, upright, by the old-fashioned piano, she commenced a quaint, sorrowful ballad, in a voice which sounded like angels' music to the busy listener.

Again and again Miss Delane made her go over certain passages—concerted bits of recitative—till she was fluent and almost perfect. Then, when nearly two hours had passed, she told the girl to get her hat on and come down to the Hall.

"What are you going to act to-night?" Amy asked, when the two elder girls were alone.

Miss Delane shrugged her shoulders. "A hashed-up version of *Cinderella* but it won't go here. We had a fearful house

last night, and, to make matters worse, Nathaniel, her sweet parent," nodding her head backwards, "drank, not wisely, but too well. I was glad Vera was nowhere near him; he always vents his drunken temper on her."

"How old is she?" asked Amy, with a shiver.

"About sixteen or seventeen, I should say, but she doesn't seem to know, and De Mortimer isn't communicative. Now we must be off. Good morning Miss Watson, and many thanks for your kindness."

Vera smiled sadly; and carrying her music rolled up under her arm, followed Miss Delane into the street.

Amy gazed after them.

"What a sweet, lovely face!" she murmured. "Mother must see her. I am sure she will fall in love with her on the spot. Poor mother! How I wish Tom would write; it is thoughtless of him. And yet he is always so tender and good. I must not complain of him, even in my mind."

The dress was finished and folded up. Then Amy busied herself for the dinner and her mother returned, looking much worried.

"The neighbours are so disagreeable, Amy," she said nervously, as she took off her bonnet. "They say we ought not to have taken these actresses in, that—"

"You must not listen to what they say, dear; remember our rent, it is due next week. We let lodgings, mother, for one purpose—to make money; and Miss Delane is as good as anyone else. Perhaps, for the matter of that, much better."

"Well, you know best, dear," said weak Mrs. Watson. "I only thought of our position."

Amy made no reply, but trotted about briskly.

In a short time the lodgers returned.

Miss Delane looked radiant; she popped her head into Amy's sitting room.

"Good business!" she cried merrily. "We've secured a patronage for to-night. Some awful swells. And I've brought home two tickets for the best seats, if you and your mother would like to go."

Amy flushed with pleasure, while Vera stepped forward and handed the tickets.

Mrs. Watson uttered an exclamation of surprise and admiration as she saw the girl.

Amy led Vera to her mother.

"This is Miss De Mortimer, and she sings like an angel. This is Miss Delane, whose lovely voice you heard outside last night, dear."

Mrs. Watson was a lady in every sense. She rose and held her slender, withered hand to the elder girl, then drew the younger one to her arms gently.

Vera's lips trembled as Mrs. Watson kissed her.

"It reminds me of dear mother," she said faintly, almost as if to herself.

Amy patted her hand, and chatted cheerily to Miss Delane.

"And you hope to get a lot of money?" she asked.

Maggie Delane nodded her head.

"Expect we shall be crammed to-night. De Mortimer, for once, has wakened up, it seems. He has made friends with the band-master of the yeomanry band, and we are to have a regular orchestra to-night. We've been rehearsing with it now. You've no idea how well Vera's and my voice sounds. You must come. Won't you both promise?"

"Will you come?" asked Vera, softly.

To Amy's surprise her mother kissed the girl again, and said "Yes."

"We shan't disgrace ourselves to-night, I can tell you," cried Miss Delane. "Shall we, Vera? This patronage means a lot to us. It will be a splendid advertisement. We ought to do crammed houses all round here. I mean to ask Nathaniel for a rise in my screw, as I believe my name brought the swells. Come along, Vera. We must furnish

up our dresses. It won't do to be anything but smart to-night."

## CHAPTER III.

"NEVER had a gun in his hand before!"

"A lot you know about it, Wenty!"

"I know this much," cried the young fellow addressed as Wenty, "the fellow's a beastly cad. There! that's conclusive, anyhow."

"I think you're about right, Darnley. If you've finished with the game pie may I request—"

"Its nearer approach to your individual self. Why certainly, my lord."

"How selfish you men are!" breathed a faint, sweet voice. "I am starving, literally starving, and—"

"By Jove!"

"Lady Anice!"

"Do forgive us?"

All the young men rose from their seats, and rushed down to where a pretty, demure looking little lady was standing.

The time was morning, the scene the breakfast hall in Beaconswood, the county seat of my Lord Vivian. A party of guns were just about to start for a day's sport. None of the ladies had ventured down to the hurried breakfast; but Lady Anice Drewe never neglected her opportunities, and here she was as smart as Redfern could make her, in a dapper shooting-costume, fastened at the throat by a miniature silver rifle.

Lord Vivian was first beside her.

"Permit me, as your host, Lady Anice, I stand discovered of the most unpardonable sin—want of courtesy. Will you ever forgive me?"

"I'll try," said her ladyship, looking up with her most bewitching glance; "but I won't promise."

"Beastly bore; she will come down in the morning," whispered Wenty, otherwise Wentworth Motte, Esq., heir to an enormous fortune, in Rex Darnley's ear.

Darnley nodded.

"Mum's the word," he said, swiftly. "Vivian's most fearfully gone—ugh! I've no patience with him. She's about the most incorrigible flirt unhung. By Jove, what luck! here's her parent. Now we shall get off."

The door opened to admit an aristocratic lady, pale and faded-looking.

A frown settled on Lady Anice's dolly face as she beheld the new comer.

"Darling," she said, affectionately, "I thought you were going to rest this morning?"

"I hope you are better, Lady Daly," Lord Vivian said, genially, as he pushed forward a chair for the lady, and ordered the servant to bring breakfast.

"A little," sighed the Countess of Daly. "I had intended to rest this morning, but—"

Her daughter understood the silence well. "But you must be looked after" was what Lady Daly should have said.

"It seems horribly rude to rush away directly you come down," apologised Eric Vivian; "but I know you will forgive us."

"Of course," bowed the Countess.

Lady Anice pouted.

"I won't," she whispered to the young host, yet her eyes belied her—they were so dewy and tender.

"Well, then, let us—what is it, Parsons?"—this to one of the footmen who approached with a rather dirty-looking visiting card on a silversalver—"Mr. Nathaniel De Mortimer—rather an early hour for a visitor," read Lord Vivian. "Never heard of such a man. Send him away, Parsons."

"Beg pardon, my lord, but he won't take no. He says he's a favour to ask."

"If it's money," cried Wenty, beginning to pretend to button up his pockets, "send him to the workhouse."

"I beg pardon, sir and my lord, I ain't sure, but I think he's something theatrical like—he's got a lot of tickets."

"By Jove! Vivian, I've hit the nail on the

head. This must be the manager or some one of that travelling operatic company we saw entering Bentley village yesterday. What a lark—have the fellow in."

Lady Anice clapped her tiny hands with childish glee.

Rex Darnley sneered a little as he watched her.

"Do, Eric," he said; "let Lady Anice see a real live actor for once."

Lord Vivian laughed.

"It is scarcely fair on him, I think," he observed.

"Oh, hang him!" exclaimed Wenty, impatiently, "he's a nuisance; have him in."

"Parsons, ask the gentleman to come here," commanded Lord Vivian.

The Countess of Daly looked a trifle disgusted, but Lady Anice was full of pretty smiles of amusement.

Parsons returned, showing in two forms—one tall, stout, dark, florid-looking, with an unbrushed, un washed, generally seedy appearance, and a decided suspicion of alcoholic tendency traced in the complexion. The second man was tall also, but thin and miserably-looking.

"My Lord Vivian," said the stout man, bowing repeatedly as he advanced, "I have the honour to speak with his lordship, have I not?"

"You have," said Lord Vivian, good-naturedly. "Pray—"

"My name is on that card—Nathaniel De Mortimer, at your service."

"Well, Mr. De Mortimer, and what can I do for you, eh?"

"A great deal, my lord, if you will." Mr. De Mortimer cleared his throat. "I am the manager and baritone of a travelling operatic company, first-rate artists, magnificent posters, dresses, &c., &c. This is Mr. Bellingham, the primo tenore."

Mr. Bellingham bowed, still looking very sad.

"And you want—?" asked Lord Vivian.

"To solicit your patronage, my lord," said the baritone, promptly. "I have here the best seats in the house for disposal. May I beg your lordship's condescension and kindness, and offer them to your lordship and friends?"

Mr. De Mortimer bowed all round, and Lady Anice laughed.

"What a funny man!" she whispered to Wenty, confidentially.

When Lord Vivian was not easily on hand Mr. Wentworth Motte did just as well with her ladyship; and, indeed, his income was of the two considerably the larger.

"What do you play, Mr.—er—Mr. De Mortimer?" asked Rex Darnley, lazily, as he sauntered forward, "and who is your company?"

"We play, my lord, an extravaganza, a little thing of my own, but comprising many well-known airs; indeed, taken from the old operas of the *Barbieri*, *Travatore*, &c."

Rex Darnley whistled softly, while Lord Vivian with difficulty repressed a smile.

"My ladies are the first in the dramatic profession—Madame Squallini, Mademoiselle Norri, Miss Marguerite Delane, and—"

"Marguerite Delane!" exclaimed Wenty, suddenly. "By Jove! she is good. I saw her in London not long ago."

"Will your lordship take tickets?" asked Mr. De Mortimer, blandly, turning to him.

Lady Anice had frowned, but now she was smiling.

"Dear Lord Vivian," she said, in her prettiest fashion, "do buy all the tickets, and we will all go—it will be such fun. Oh, do!"

"Anice," whispered the Countess.

But Anice was carefully deaf.

"Certainly," replied Lord Vivian, "we will go. I have a large party, Mr. De Mortimer. You had better leave all these reserved tickets—what I don't use shall be returned. If you come into my study for one instant we will finish the matter. Boys, I shall be ready for

the covers in two minutes. Countess, Lady Anice, *au revoir*."

Mr. De Mortimer and the sad-looking tenor bowed and bowed till they got themselves out of the room in some miraculous way, and then Lady Anice indulged in a burst of airy laughter.

"What fun!" she cried. "How I shall enjoy it, dearest mother. I must first run and tell Guinevere and the others. Messieurs"—dropping a graceful courtesy—"Au revoir." Wenty, Rex Darnley and one or two others bowed, and the dainty little figure trotted away.

Rex Darnley sat down beside the Countess. "Aunt Eleanor," he said gently, "why don't you go back to your room and rest? You look quite worn out."

"I am tired," the lady agreed with a sigh, "but—"

"But Anice is a selfish, inconsiderate minx, not to put too fine a point on it. She has no right down at these breakfasts—the men think it a bore, and it is not the proper thing. I shall speak to Dunmore. Perhaps her brother may have some little influence with her. At any rate, your health should be considered."

"Dear Rex," said the lady, gently, "you are always so kind and considerate. My child does not think as you do, unfortunately for me."

"Because you are a slave to her, that's why. If you don't feel better to-night don't think it your duty to drag yourself out to chaperone Anice. Mrs. Bolton is going, and she will undertake it. Now I must go. Do rest awhile."

"I will, dear, I will."

The Countess's eyes were full of tears, but her face made no sign. She smiled only for an instant, as her nephew held the door open for her to pass.

Rex caught a glimpse of his cousin on the staircase flitting up, and Lord Vivian running down with a flush on his handsome face.

"Sly little cat!" he mused. "She is fooling Eric to the last degree, but it shan't go too far."

"Now we are ready," called the host; and after much lighting of cigars and seeing that all the necessaries were in their places, they mounted the carts and drove away.

(To be continued.)

THAT adoration which a young man gives to a woman whom he feels to be greater and better than himself, is hardly distinguishable from religious feeling. What deep and worthy love is so? whether of woman or child, or art or music. Our caresses, our tender words, are still rapture under the influence of autumn sunsets or pillared vistas, or calm, majestic statues of Beethoven symphonies, all bring with them the consciousness that they are mere waves and ripples in an unfathomed ocean of love and beauty; our emotion in its keenest moments passes from expression into silence, our love at its highest flood rushes beyond its object, and loses itself in the sense of divine mystery.

ADULTERATED FOOD.—Even in the most ancient times food was adulterated. In Thrace bread was mixed with powdered dried roots, in Syria with dried mulberries, in Egypt with whole grains. In modern times in Sweden they add to the bread powdered dried fish; in Ireland and in Iceland, moss, which being nutritious, keeps the bread from drying; in Prussia, white clay, which contains alkali salts and makes bread very light; in Russia, powdered bark or finely-chopped straw. On the western shore of England a certain kind of seaweed is gathered, washed, boiled and then baked with oatmeal flour. In Africa powdered dried locusts are mixed with bread; in India potatoes and pea flour, and during the famine stones ground to a fine powder.

## TOOTHACHE.

No complaint in the world, perhaps, elicits less sympathy than toothache. Many is the time and oft I have heard people laughed at for having it. "This was called 'trying to laugh them out of it.'"

Sudden mirthful affections of the mind have often, I grant you, scared away a trifling pain, but never the agony of an aching tooth.

The most common kind of toothache is probably that caused by a simple inflammation of the pulp of the tooth, which generally is a decayed one. The inflammation itself is the result of a cold.

Bad enough to bear is this kind of toothache, and it is apt to recur again and again, from just the same causes, in spite of all the pain-killing nostrums that can be applied.

The radical cure for toothache of this sort is so simple that a child can understand its why and wherefore. Go boldly to a good dentist and have it cleaned and filled. And let me tell you this, that the cleaning is a very essential part of the operation.

Go in the interval of pain, and this latter may in all cases be removed by rest, warmth in bed, and an aperient of a cooling kind. Here is something that few people know—saline aperients are most valuable in the treatment of all trifling inflammations; they reduce the general bulk of the blood and remove inflammatory products.

The roughest forms of saline are the Epsom and Glauber salts; the milder, Seidlitz powders, Pulla and other natural waters.

But as toothache is likely to recur, those who suffer from it should see to the state of the general health, and take a mild tonic if need be, and, above all, make a habit of brushing the teeth after every meal.

Far too little care is taken of the teeth. From early infancy children ought to be taught the use of the toothbrush—a soft one, be it remembered—and chided if at any time they neglect it.

At the same time, it is the duty of the parents to notice that at the period of second dentition things are going on regularly; and loose teeth should be removed, lest they cause disfigurement in the new rows coming up.

Never eat to repletion; toothache may be caused by indigestion.

To remove the actual pain, chloroform and creosote may be applied with a morsel of lint over the aching tooth again and again, until numbness ensues. This is, however, a doubtful, if not a dangerous remedy, and should be used, therefore, with great caution.

Actual decay of teeth is a disease mostly of a constitutional kind, and nearly always requires the advice of a doctor, combined with the work of a dentist.

MOTHERS AND DAUGHTERS.—How strange it is that ideas in various parts of the globe are so contradictory. For instance, take the question of girls. In spite of our advancing ideas, we have a general conviction that girls should not be put to very hard work. We shield them if we can. In Asia and Africa, on the contrary, in spite of all we are hearing of the lazy lives of women in those countries, an old belief prevails that they were born to labour. The same is true in many parts of Germany. In Turkestan, and on the Tartar steppes, the Kirghese sultanas and their daughters, in whose veins flow the blood of long lines of kings, still milk the sheep, cows, and goats, and perform the menial duties of the household. They reverse our order of things. The mother wears silk and the daughter calico; the mother cultivates accomplishments, and the daughter does the drudgery; in fact, they really consider the mother entitled to the best of everything! Such is it to be uncivilised. There the mother is at home in the parlour and the daughter in the kitchen, and we would look in vain for the child too fashionable and well-educated to scorn her mother. What a blessed state of affairs!



## EYES.

WHAT merry mischief lies  
Within a maiden's eyes,  
Sweet eyes of every shade and hue;  
And whether false or true—  
Their soft light who can analyse?

Here eyes as black as sloes  
Illume a face the rose  
Might envy, and in shadows fade.  
They glorify the maid,  
Whose forehead mocks the mountain snows.

There eyes, large, soft, and grey,  
Add lustre to the day;  
Their glory, like a flash of mind,  
Might strike fond Cupid blind,  
Or light a lover on his way.

Yonder are eyes of blue,  
And their cerulean hue  
Reflects a halo heavenly bright.  
It is a trustful light.  
Whose lustre, like its source, is true.

How can a lover choose,  
When eyes as black as sloes,  
Or flashing eyes of glorious grey,  
As bright as cloudless day,  
Their varying lights and shades disclose?

Half hidden light that lies  
Within a maiden's eyes  
May strike like lightning from above;  
Or, like the light of love,  
Be soft as rays of genial skies.

Eyes grey or brown or blue,  
Let us believe them true;  
The light of souls to mortals given  
Is light of love divine,  
May it for ever shine  
To make home here like home in heaven.

G. W. B.

## HILDA'S FORTUNES.

—X—

## CHAPTER XXVI.

THAT same evening Verrall left Dering Court for London. Arthur could not accompany his friend to the station in consequence of his sprained ankle, but as he was saying "good-bye," he observed,—

"I shall be running up to town myself in a few days—when my foot gets all right—so it won't be long before I see you again."

Verrall took lodgings in a quiet road in Bayswater, as his funds would not allow him to put up at an hotel, and on the evening following his arrival he went to call on a Mr. Colquhoun, whose brother had been in the same regiment with him, and whom he had nursed in his last illness.

Mr. Colquhoun lived in a street off Piccadilly, and as he was essentially a society man, and out most evenings, Eric was really surprised to find him at home when he called.

"I congratulate myself," he said, as he shook hands with him. "I am agreeably disappointed at finding you in, for I thought I should be reduced to leaving my card, and a message that I wanted to see you."

"I had a bit of a sore throat this evening, so I decided to stay at home and nurse it," was the reply. "But I am very pleased to see you. Sit down."

Eric gave his hat and coat to the servant, and then obeyed his host's invitation.

"I was wondering what had become of you!" went on Mr. Colquhoun—a handsome man of about fifty—"I have not seen you for some time."

"No, I have been in the country—staying with Lord Dering at his father's place in W—shire."

"Dering Court? I know it—used to go there for the shooting some years ago. Lord

Westlynn and I were at Oxford together, and rather intimate at one time."

"Did you know his mother-in-law—Lady Hawksley?"

Colquhoun made a wry face.

"Should think I did! One of the sharpest old ladies I ever had the pleasure of meeting. We all thought Westlynn deucedly plucky when he married her daughter, for there were few men who would have risked such a mother-in-law. However, her daughter was very handsome, and devoted to the Earl; he was Viscount Dering then, so I suppose he thought it worth while."

"I want to know something about Lady Hawksley—as much as you can tell me, in fact."

"My dear fellow. I shall be most happy to oblige you, but before you begin asking questions have a cigar, and a brandy-and-soda."

Having provided his guest with these two essentials, Colquhoun resumed his seat opposite.

"Now then, fire away," he said.

"Well, first of all, who was Lady Hawksley?"

"She was the only child of a Scotch peer, and she married Baron Hawksley of Hawksley."

"How many children had she?"

"Only one that lived past infancy."

"Lady Westlynn?"

"Yes. There was rather a fuss over her marriage, and I will tell you the particulars as well as I can remember them. When the Honourable Maude Hawksley was presented at Court she made rather a sensation because of her beauty, and Lord Dering immediately distinguished her by paying her a good deal of attention, which her mother systematically encouraged. Presently, for some reason or other, he ceased this attention, and Lady Hawksley was very wrath, especially as it was quite clear the Honourable Maude had fallen head over ears in love with him. Well, time went on, and Dering sobered down very considerably, but made no attempt to make Miss Hawksley his wife, and so two or three years passed by; then Lord Dering suddenly disappeared from fashionable life, and after twelve months spent in entire seclusion he astonished everybody by marrying her. Poor thing! She died when her first child was born, and within a month of her husband's succession to the Earldom."

There was nothing in this at all calculated to assist Eric, who was inclined to feel a little disappointed at the result of his inquiries.

"Lord Westlynn, since his wife's death, has hardly ever been up to town," continued Colquhoun, after a few meditative puffs at his cigar. "He seemed to lose all taste for fashionable gaieties, and has devoted himself to the cultivation of his estate, and the welfare of his tenants. I have my own ideas about his sudden change."

"Do you think it was due to his wife's death?"

"No, for the alteration came before he was married. It is never any good to repeat scandal, especially scandal that is over twenty years' old; but report said he was in love with a certain beautiful actress, whose sudden disappearance from the stage was attributed to his influence. My impression is he would have married her if his father had not been such an old autocrat, whose patrician prejudices would never have permitted such an union."

"But Lord Dering—the present Earl—was of age, and could therefore do as he liked, couldn't he?"

"He was of age, but the Westlynn estates were not entailed, and the old man could leave them to whom he liked. He would have been safe to disinherit his son if the latter had married against his wishes."

"What became of the actress?"

"Nobody ever knew; she disappeared from the world as completely as a falling star

disappears from the sky, and was not heard of afterwards."

"What was her name?"

"Her stage name was Flora Graham, but I should imagine that was not her real name. I have met her once or twice, and if I had been asked, I should have said she was the last woman in the world to make a mistake of that kind. She was a charming creature, and as pure and modest as if she had never seen a green-room in her life. I was three parts in love with her myself, and I would willingly have offered to marry her if I had thought there was any chance of her accepting me."

Colquhoun sighed. He was not a romantic man, but perhaps the beautiful actress had awoken within him all the sentiment of which his nature was capable, and even across this lapse of years her memory brought back the glamour of those old days. Who knows?

"Hullo, Colquhoun, are you getting sentimental?" asked Eric, half banteringly. "I am sorry if I have betrayed you into painful remembrances."

"They are not painful now. Perhaps at the time, when I fancied myself in love with her, I fretted myself into believing I was the victim of a 'green and yellow melancholy,' but the delusion has long since passed away; and now, if I am inclined to regret we were never more than friends to each other, I say to myself, 'Well, it is better so, for if we had married we should probably have quarrelled, and ended by slanging each other in the Divorce Court,' so, taking all things into consideration, matters are better as they are."

"You are a philosopher," observed Eric, smiling.

"Yes, in my way I suppose I am, but it is a kind of philosophy most bachelors drift into when they have passed the age of forty. You will find it out yourself if you arrive at two score years without taking unto yourself a wife. Have another cigar?"

He held out the case to him, and as Eric bent forward to take one from it the light fell full upon his face, from beneath the shade of the lamp. Colquhoun, who was looking at him, started a little.

"What's the matter?" queried Verrall, biting off the end of the cigar he had selected.

"Why, a strange thought struck me—I daresay you'll laugh at me if I tell it you."

"No danger of that."

"Well, then, I've often wondered who it was you reminded me of, and now I know—you are like Flora Graham."

"Really!"

"Yes, very like her when one remembers that she was a woman, and you are a man."

"I suppose I ought to consider it a compliment, as you say she was so good-looking," observed the young officer, lightly.

"Did not Lord Westlynn notice the resemblance?" asked his companion.

"Not that I am aware; at least he never told me that he did, but even if he had done so I don't suppose he would have mentioned the fact."

"Probably not," thoughtfully returned the host, who had suddenly grown meditative.

Eric presently took leave, and as he walked along Park-lane and the Bayswater-road towards his lodgings, he thought over what he had heard. After all, it did not amount to much, and gave him no clue to the interest, or rather hatred, he had excited in Lady Hawksley.

He was not quite sure he had been right in listening to Colquhoun's remarks concerning Lord Westlynn's past—a scandal that had long ago been buried in oblivion, but the repetition of which had hurt him, as with a vague sense of pain.

"He is the last man in the world I should have imagined capable of taking a woman away like that," he said to himself; "which shows, I suppose, that I am profoundly ignorant of human nature. I had an idea that Lord Westlynn was one of the

honourable and chivalrous of men, and it is a disappointment to me to find the golden idol has clay feet."

The next morning, as he was walking up Regent-street he was suddenly accosted by a fair-haired, high-coloured young woman, attired somewhat gorgeously, who sprang out of a carriage and caught him by the arm.

"How do you do, Captain Verrall? Don't you recognise me?" she asked, in a loud, good-natured voice, while Eric raised his hat in puzzled wonderment. "I am Emmeline De Courcy."

"Ah! I beg your pardon; ten thousand pardons, in fact. I was so deeply in thought that—"

"You needn't try to excuse yourself," interrupted the young lady, with her accustomed candour. "It's quite clear that you had forgotten me, and half-a-dozen white lies won't convince me to the contrary. Still, I don't mind, for it was easy to see the night you were at our house that you were so taken up with Miss Fitzherbert as to have no eyes for anyone else. When did you see her last?"

"About a week ago," responded Eric, in some confusion at this outspoken opinion.

"How was she? I want to hear all about her, for I liked her awfully, I assure you I did, and ma would give anything to have her back now, for the last governess we had used to get tight, and this one cheeks ma to that extent that poor ma went into hysterics the other day. As for the children, they are running right down wild, and the house is a perfect bear garden. Come in here with me," added Miss De Courcy, volubly, "and then you can tell me something about Hilda."

Thus commanded, Eric had no alternative but compliance. The "here" was a Scotch warehouse, where Emmeline explained she was going to buy a maid.

Verrall stood by her while she selected it, and satisfied her curiosity with regard to Hilda. After a little while he glanced round the shop, and his eyes became fixed on a piece of woollen stuff displayed in folds, the pattern of which seemed familiar to him, but before he could go to examine it Miss Emmeline was talking to him in a confidential strain.

"I suppose you'll be seeing Hilda before long, and, if you do, tell her that affairs between T. M. and me are getting to a climax; she'll understand what that means."

Eric looked puzzled—as well he might—at this mysterious message, but Emmeline nodded her head sagely, and then heaved a deep sigh, neither of which proceedings conveyed to his mind a very clear idea of what she meant.

Presently she whisked off to the other end of the shop, and then he examined the piece of material that had attracted his attention, and which proved to be identical with the pattern of his carefully-preserved little frock. His heart began to beat a little faster; had he at last alighted on the clue he sought?

A minute later and he was laughing at his own folly. As if there were not hundreds of pieces of Scotch plaid like that in the world!

"Were you wanting anything in this line, sir?" asked an obsequious shopman, coming to his side, and fingering the material after the approved professional manner. "A splendid piece of stuff, sir; all wool, every thread of it."

"Is it the plaid of any particular clan?" asked Eric, struck by a sudden idea.

"Yes, sir. I will tell you which one in a moment."

He disappeared, and presently came back with a book in his hand, which he had evidently been consulting.

"I find it is the Castleton tartan; one of the least known of the plaids. Baron Castleton is one of the titles of an English peer, and that is why one never hears of it."

"What English peer?" asked Eric, without attaching any importance to the question, for by this time he had come to the conclusion that he was making a fool of himself by these fruitless inquiries.

The answer, however, was a little startling. "The Earl of Westlynn, sir."

## CHAPTER XXVII.

"You do not seem to take your usual interest in the lesson," observed Nadir to the young mistress of the Castle, as he looked up from the book he had been reading aloud. "You are pale and heavy-looking. Are you not well?"

"Yes; a little tired, that is all," responded the girl, wearily, as she pushed away her papers, "only I don't think I am exactly in a working mood."

"Then it is useless for us to continue," observed the Hindoo, decidedly. "Knowledge flies from the student who is only half-hearted in his attempt to secure her, so we will defer our lesson until to-morrow."

Hilda breathed a sigh of relief, and leaned back in her chair, Nadir watching her with attentive interest.

"You are very sad," he said, presently. "Sorrow and youth are not generally allied."

"Sorrow is no respecter of persons," added the girl, with a faint smile. "It seems to me that neither young nor old, rich nor poor, are exempt, only the young feel more acutely than their elders."

"I grieve to hear you speak thus. I had hoped that your path, at least, would be strewn with roses."

"Perhaps it is, only the thorns are sharp, and in thinking of them I ignore the flowers."

Hilda had unconsciously fallen into the metaphorical style of Nadir, who, in common with most Asiatics, preferred hyperbole as a means of expressing himself.

"You should go out," he said, kindly. "There is nothing like fresh air for low spirits."

"You preach what you do not practise."

"I am not singular in that respect," remarked Nadir, with a touch of satire; "besides," he added, in a lower tone, "my disease is past that remedy."

"I took your advice yesterday, and went for a drive," continued Hilda. "We called at the Manor House, but found no one at home."

"Indeed!"

"The butler said his master and Miss St. John had left suddenly for the south of France, which surprised me very much, for when I saw Miss St. John last she pressed me to call on her, and mentioned that I might be pretty sure of finding her at home any afternoon. The funny part of the matter is that when I asked the name of the place his master had gone to the servant said he did not know."

"That was strange, very," murmured the Hindoo, taking up a screen to shield his face from the blaze of the stove.

"Yes, and last night Mr. Fox—who, you know, had come from town to get me to sign some documents—told me that he was on the platform at Charing-cross about three weeks or a month ago, and saw Sir Douglas and his daughter and a Colonel Fanshawe, apparently waiting for the Continental mail."

Hilda stopped suddenly, for Nadir had risen from his chair, the screen dropping from his hand, and his eyes full of wild dread.

"Who did you say?" he exclaimed, his breath coming fast, as he stepped a pace backward.

"Colonel Fanshawe. I do not know him, and should have thought nothing of the mention of his name if Mr. Fox had not entered into a few details concerning him. It seems he knew him a long time ago, and declares that he is a very powerful mesmerist."

She stopped again. The Hindoo put his hand against his heart, swayed unsteadily to and fro, and then fell on his face at her feet.

Hilda was rather frightened, for it had never before been her lot to see a fainting man; however, she went to the window, threw it open, and then got a carafe that

stood on a side table, and after turning the Hindoo on his back (not a very difficult task, for Nadir was slenderly made) scattered the water plentifully over his face. This failing to revive him, she loosed the scarf he wore loosely twisted round his neck, and unbuttoned his Indian silk shirt at the throat, when a great surprise awaited her.

The skin below that portion of the throat that was usually uncovered was as white as her own!

Our heroine was absolutely dumfounded at this discovery, which seemed to declare that Nadir's life was one long concealment; but directly she made it the pseudo Hindoo opened his eyes, and immediately rose to his feet, looking a little bewildered, but having his feelings perfectly under control.

His first action was to draw the scarf close up round his neck, then he said, in his usual gentle voice,—

"I am afraid I have frightened you, Miss Fitzherbert. I am very sorry, but I am subject to these attacks, and they come on so suddenly that no amount of precaution can avert them. Do you mind if I leave you for awhile? I really do not feel equal to continuing our lesson."

"I thought we had already made up our minds to postpone it," Hilda said; but she at once took the hint, and left the room, both puzzled and grieved at her newly-acquired knowledge.

What did it mean? Simply that Nadir, instead of being a Hindoo as he represented himself, and as everyone believed him to be, was an European, who for reasons best known to himself, chose to conceal his identity by dyeing his face and hands with walnut juice.

No one in the household had the faintest idea of the fraud, and Hilda wondered whether the late baronet had been aware of it. She came to the conclusion that he must have been, for if he had not known the whole of Nadir's history, he certainly would not have permitted him to occupy apartments in the Castle for so long; and this argument was in the man's favour, inasmuch as it seemed to declare he had legitimate reasons for his concealment.

Hilda pondered a good deal over the mystery, but no amount of thought availed to elucidate it; indeed, the more she thought the more puzzled she became.

Was it her duty to acquaint anyone—Mr. Fox, for example—with the discovery, or should she preserve silence concerning it?

The lawyer was in the Castle, and she was now accustomed to going to him for advice on all points that perplexed her, for he was a particularly shrewd, clear-headed man, ready to seize the main facts of any case, and give judgment upon it with equal facility.

Finally she resolved to be guided by his counsel, and thereupon went to the library, where she found him busy over some papers.

"I want to consult you, Mr. Fox, if you can spare me half-an-hour."

"Certainly; delighted to be of service to you," responded the lawyer, placing a seat for her, and then taking one opposite. "In what way can I oblige you?"

Briefly Hilda narrated what had taken place, Mr. Fox playing with a paper knife as he listened; this was a habit of his, and he said his brain worked quicker when his fingers were employed.

He seemed slightly embarrassed as the young heiress concluded, by saying,—

"Perhaps you were aware of this before, Mr. Fox?"

"To be candid, I was," he retorted, after a momentary hesitation. "Sir Herbert himself told me shortly before his death that Nadir was English, but had a purpose in assuming an Asiatic appearance."

"And did he give you any further particulars?"

"None that I am at liberty to repeat."

"Then you cannot tell me who he is?"

"I cannot."

"Still," she added, with a piercing glance, "you know more of him than I do?"



"I am one fact in advance of you, but, as I said before, that fact I may not divulge. I can only tell you that Sir Herbert took a great interest in his *protege*, who, he informed me, was the victim of adverse circumstances. One thing I may tell you, that the poor fellow is quite worthy of any confidence you may think fit to repose in him. He has been very unfortunate, but not through his own fault."

"I am glad to hear it, Mr. Fox. I will not attempt to make you betray the trust reposed in you by Sir Herbert, but I will ask you this. Do you think I had better let Nadir know I have discovered his secret, or allow things to go on as they have hitherto done?"

"The latter," he returned, promptly. "For Nadir to know that you were aware he was not what he pretended to be would distress him beyond measure, and for no good either, so that if you would allow me to advise you, I should say keep your knowledge entirely to yourself—do not even let your cousin share it!"

Hilda resolved to adopt this course, but she smiled rather sadly at the last sentence.

Evelyn was one of the last people in the world to whom she would give her confidence now!

The next day, to her surprise, she received a note from Nadir. It ran as follows,—

"GRACIOUS AND HONOURED LADY,—I write to ask you kindly to put off our lessons for a few days, as I find it necessary to leave the Castle this morning, and may be absent nearly a week. When I return I shall hope to see the red roses again blooming in your cheeks, for I like not these white ones that have been there lately. Farewell; may all good angels attend on you. "NADIR."

Here was another mystery, for only a few days ago he had told her that it was nearly twenty years since he had been in a train; it therefore followed that some imperious necessity had suddenly arisen for him thus to forsake the habits of years, and leave the Castle with so little warning.

Hilda recalled that the name of Colonel Fanshawe had seemed to agitate him when she mentioned it, and that his faint had occurred immediately afterwards. Had the two circumstances any connection? she wondered—and then dismissed the subject from her mind, feeling half-ashamed of her own curiosity.

The relations between herself and her cousin were rather strained, and had been so since Verrall's last visit to the Castle.

Evelyn had never mentioned his name, and carefully avoided the subject of her supposed engagement, from which Hilda concluded that Eric had requested her to keep it secret.

Our heroine was not the sort of girl to wear her heart on her sleeve, and with all the strength of her nature she tried to root out the love which had made her its victim. Alas! the roots had struck so deeply, and entwined themselves so firmly with the very fibres of her heart, that to disentangle them was an impossibility which only death would overcome.

Hilda told herself that Verrall was false and treacherous, for had he not declared his love for her that night in the conservatory, when she had given him the violets? Not in words, it is true, but in language equally forcible, for if man's eyes had ever spoken his had then.

And yet, in spite of all that had passed, he was the only man in the world for whom she had ever cared—for whom she ever would care.

Hers was not the love that lasts "a week or a day," but, unfortunately for her, "the love that loves away!" and not all the endeavours of which she was capable could lessen its force.

Physically, she was far from well. Each day she grew paler and thinner; her step lost its elasticity, her voice its laughing music; she could not eat, and her languor even prevented her from taking exercise. She, who had hitherto been so active, would now sit nearly

all day over the fire, a book in her hand, which, however, she rarely looked at.

The servants, as they saw her, shook their heads and whispered together, telling each other she looked like a snow wreath that was melting away beneath the sunshine.

As a matter of fact, they were all concerned on her behalf, for even in this short time they had grown very fond of her.

Mrs. Parker (the chaperone engaged by Mr. Fox to play propriety at the Castle) came to her one day and spoke to her on the subject.

She was a quiet, commonplace sort of woman, but kind-hearted, and had conceived an affection for the heiress.

"Had you not better see a doctor, my dear?" she said, her usually placid face looking very anxious as she spoke.

"Why should I see a doctor?" questioned Hilda, listlessly. "There is nothing specific the matter with me. I only feel very tired."

"But you ought not to feel so, and I am sure a doctor would do you good."

Hilda smiled.

Mrs. Parker was one of those women whose faith in the medical profession is unbounded, and on whom the very sight of a physician had an immediate effect.

"I have never in my life been under a doctor's care," she observed.

"That is no reason why you never should be," sensibly urged Mrs. Parker. "Personally, it would be a very great satisfaction if you would allow Dr. Freeman to be called in. What do you say, Miss Monkton?"

"That you are making a great fuss about nothing," rejoined Evelyn, with a short laugh, as she looked up from the volume she was reading. "As Hilda says, there is nothing the matter with her. I see no occasion to be alarmed. She is surely the best judge of her own health."

"But see how ill she looks!"

"She is pale, certainly, but as far as that goes, I am pale, too, and yet I am well enough."

"Yes, but yours is a different sort of pallor. Then Miss Fitzherbert eats nothing."

"Her appetite is not large at the best of times, and you must remember the weather has been rather trying of late."

Before such determined opposition Mrs. Parker's spirits sank, and she ceased her entreaties—for a time, that is.

At the end of a week, seeing that Hilda was worse rather than better, she renewed them, and with such success that the next morning Dr. Freeman came to the Castle.

He was a kindly man of middle age, rather corpulent, and looking not only as if he liked the good things of this life, but as if they agreed with him.

"I am afraid you will think you have been brought here under false pretences," smiled Hilda, as she shook hands with him, "for I really have nothing the matter with me."

The doctor raised his eyebrows.

"Then your looks belie you, Miss Fitzherbert," he returned, quietly, taking a seat at her side, and feeling her pulse. "How is it—if you are well—that you are so pale and shadowy?"

"Oh, I don't know"—restlessly—"the cold weather perhaps; it always seems to nip me up."

Dr. Freeman asked her various questions, looked at her tongue, and went through the usual professional formula; then he wrote a prescription in his pocket-book.

"I shall give you a tonic, Miss Fitzherbert, for, as a matter of fact, it is tone you want; indeed, a month at the sea would brace you up very considerably, if you could make up your mind to leave home this weather."

"But I could not," exclaimed Hilda, with a little shiver. "I will try the tonic in preference."

As the physician was leaving Evelyn Monkton waylaid him in the hall.

"Is there really anything wrong with my cousin?" she asked, "or is it only that old woman's foolish fancy?"

"Miss Fitzherbert is very far from well." "What is the matter with her?"

"It is rather early in the day to answer that question, Miss Monkton," said the doctor, with a smile; "in fact, I do not think there is anything the matter with her, so far as actual disease goes. She is simply below par, and must be strengthened with tonics, and wine and jelly, and everything that is nourishing. I suppose I may rely on you to see that my instructions are carried out?"

"Oh yes, but directly you think there is any necessity for it you had better get a nurse, for I am quite inexperienced in sickness; and although I should, of course, do my best, I should be afraid of making blunders."

"There is no such necessity—at present," responded the physician, drawing on gloves, and bowing his farewell.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE day after Colonel Fanshawe's declaration of love Ida saw her father, and told him what had occurred. To her surprise he seemed neither astonished nor annoyed, and she was more than half-inclined to suspect the officer had been before her in the communication.

"We must quit the chateau at once," she observed, firmly.

"Is it really necessary?" asked Sir Douglas, to whom the prospect of travel was by no means inviting. "Colonel Fanshawe informs me that he will be leaving at the end of the week."

"Still, it is for us to take the initiative. I consider he has behaved very badly under the circumstances. So long as we were under his roof he ought to have been doubly careful not to annoy me."

"My dear," the Baronet expostulated, mildly, "he did not intend to annoy you; and when people are in love; they are apt to forget prudence—sometimes."

"In love!" echoed Ida, scornfully. "I do not believe he is capable of being in love with anybody except himself. If you said he was in love with the fortune that he thinks I shall one day enjoy you would be a good deal nearer the mark."

"You judge him harshly."

"I say what I think."

"All the same I do not feel inclined to take your estimate as a correct one. I believe him to be a thoroughly upright, honourable man, and it is a source of regret to me that you have seen fit to neglect his addresses."

"Papa!"

"I repeat, Ida, that I should have been very glad to welcome him as your husband. I am anxious to see you married, for my life is uncertain, and if anything happened to me who would there be to look after you?"

"Don't talk like that, daddy, dear!"

"But I must, Ida. It seems to me that I have only just awoke to the responsibility of having a grown-up daughter, and now I feel that my greatest desire is to see you married."

"You are in a tremendous hurry to get rid of me," pouting,

"So far from that being the case I would prefer your marrying a poor man, in order that I might always keep you with me. Do not mistake me, darling—believe that my sole wish is for your welfare!"

"I do believe it, daddy, only be assured of this—I shall never marry. I am going to be an old maid," she added, with attempted playfulness, "and by-and-by you will see me develop a taste for cats, and parrots, and monkeys. I shall grow very neat in my attire, and methodical in my habits, and wear a pair of blue spectacles. What do you think of the picture?"

"I don't like it at all," responded the Baronet, with a smile, "and, what is more, I fail entirely to recognise my pretty little daughter. No, Ida; it will never do for you to be an old maid. A woman's natural destiny is marriage."

"Then a good many women fail to fulfil their destiny."

"That may be—nay, must be, but there is no necessity that you should swell the number. Marriage is a lottery, to be sure, but some people draw prizes."

"Very few," interrupted Ida, grimly. "For my part, I am inclined to think the cat, and parrot, and monkeys are a very good substitute for a husband!"

"Colonel Fanshawe is a little older than you, certainly," went on Sir Douglas, ignoring this last remark; "but in all other respects he would make a very suitable husband. He is of good family, and has several times distinguished himself in action. Most women would think it an honour to have attracted him."

"Perhaps. I do not, and I should be very glad to believe that I should never set eyes on him again," candidly declared Ida. "Papa, will you grant me this favour—leave the Chateau Vert immediately?"

Sir Douglas hesitated.

"I cannot leave this week, for I have promised Fanshawe I would not do so. Next week, however, we may perhaps go."

Ida retired, feeling deeply mortified at the result of the interview. It was quite clear the officer had already seen her father, and that his strong will was exerting a powerful influence on that of the baronet. She felt helpless and miserable, for Colonel Fanshawe affected her with a strange sense of terror against which she was powerless to struggle. To explain this to Sir Douglas was impossible, for he, prejudiced as he was in his host's favour, would assuredly have laughed at the idea, and there was absolutely no one else to whom she could apply.

She mentally ran over the list of her friends, and they were reduced to two—Mr. Field, the rector of the village, and Mrs. Moreton. Both these people were good and kind in their way, but neither would think her fear of Fanshawe justified by what had taken place, and even if they did—what could they do?

"Am I growing fanciful?" the girl asked herself, as she sat at the window of the boudoir, and looked out on the gloomy fir that surrounded the chateau. "I don't suppose I could reduce my fears to the level of common sense, but yet, they are none the less real."

She felt so lonely and miserable that she rang the bell for her maid, who, if she could not enter into her mistress's feelings, would at least give her sympathy. To her surprise the summons was answered by Keziah Hepburn.

"I rang for Lucy," she said, with a faint trace of hauteur in her voice. "Please tell her to come to me at once."

"Lucy has left the chateau, mademoiselle."

"Left the chateau—impossible!"

"It is nevertheless true," said the woman, stolidly.

"But where has she gone?"

"To England."

Ida gazed at her as though hardly understanding the meaning of what she said, for Lucy had helped her to dress that morning.

"Who sent her away?" she demanded, the colour coming in a hot rush to her cheeks.

"Sir Douglas St. John. The truth is, the Colonel missed a very valuable ring, and suspicion pointed to Lucy, so when you were out this morning her box was searched, and the ring was discovered in it."

"Lucy dishonest—Lucy a thief! Oh! I cannot believe it possible."

"We could not doubt our own eyesight, and Sir Douglas himself saw the ring there. He was very much grieved, and said the girl had better go back to England at once—before you heard anything about it, for he knew how it would vex you; so Lucy was driven straight off to the station, and a ticket taken for her to Calais. In future I will wait upon you."

"You will do nothing of the sort," responded Ida, brusquely, tears of vexation rush-

ing to her eyes; "I can wait upon myself quite well for the short time I am here."

Keziah bent her head in acquiescence, while a sardonic smile curved her lips.

"As you will, mademoiselle," she said, as she withdrew.

As soon as she was alone Ida sprang to her feet, and commenced pacing the room, her hands clasped tightly together.

"It is a plot—a vile plot—to send the girl away from me!" she said to herself. "Colonel Fanshawe knew she was a true and staunch friend of mine, and so he resolved to get rid of her—and yet if I were to tell papa this he would not believe it. What shall I do?—oh! what shall I do?"

At this moment there came a gentle knock at the door, followed by the entrance of the officer himself.

Without giving herself time for reflection Ida faced him, exclaiming passionately, "Why have you sent Lucy away?"

"Because an unfortunate necessity compelled me to do so—or, rather, to speak more correctly, compelled your father; for I, personally, had nothing to do with the matter of her departure."

"You were instrumental in it—either you or your housekeeper, Keziah Hepburn."

"My dear Miss Ida, you do us both an injustice—indeed you do. Your maid had stolen a diamond ring of mine, and it was for that reason she was dismissed. Your father did not think her a proper person to attend his daughter, and, I must confess, I quite agreed with him."

"Lucy has been with me for three years, and I have always found her honest itself."

"That may be, and it makes her present indiscretion all the sadder."

"She was no thief—of that I am convinced."

"But the ring was found in her box!"

"Then it was put there!"

He looked a little amused at her warm championship.

"Who do you think would put it there?" he asked, stroking his heavy moustache, and smiling.

She returned his gaze unflinchingly, and then exclaimed boldly,—

"Either you or your housekeeper."

At this, Colonel Fanshawe laughed aloud.

"What a very strange notion—how could it possibly have got into your head?"

Ida did not reply. By this time she had lowered her eyes, for something in his glance actually seemed to burn her, and, turning very pale, she grasped hold of the back of a settee near which she was standing, in order to steady herself.

"Sit down!" he commanded, authoritatively. "You are not well."

She obeyed his order, striving with all her might to stibdu the sudden trembling that had seized her, but which she was quite powerless to conquer.

He remained standing opposite, his eyes still fixed on hers, while their pupils dilated until they became abnormally large. Then he made a few passes with his hand.

"What are you doing—what does this mean?" she cried out, making a violent effort to rise, but not succeeding.

"It means that I will you to remain in that chair, and that you are unable to resist my influence. In a word, Miss St. John, you are the victim of that force whose mysteries you wished to penetrate, and of which I am master!"

(To be continued.)

It is a sad weakness in us, after all, that the thought of a man's death hallows him anew to us; as if life were not sacred too—as if it were comparatively a light thing to fail in love and reverence to the brother who has to climb the whole toilsome steep with us, and all our tears and tenderness were due to the one who is spared that hard journey.

THE FAMILY TABLE.—A neat, well-covered dining-table is, in itself, a lesson to the children. We have noticed that a sensitive child always invariably has better manners when dressed in his best, and have seen with surprise the effect produced upon a certain small boy of our acquaintance by handsomely-dressed ladies who are polite to him. To the inviting table, where there should always be something attractive, however simple the meal may be, most children will come prepared to behave properly. It is really worth while, and, when philosophically considered, is a matter of great importance, to lay aside as far as possible all thoughts of hard work done before or to be done after the meal, and to allow no vexatious questions to be discussed at this time. The habit of brooding over our work, and exhausting ourselves by going all over it in our minds, is one to be studiously avoided.

To those who have opportunities of culture placed within their reach, these are the instruments of the Divine discipline. It is part of that discipline to put large opportunities in men's hands, and to leave it to themselves whether they will use or neglect them. There shall be no coercion to make us turn them to account. Occasions of learning and self-improvement come, stay with us for a while, and then pass. And the wheels of time shall not be reversed to bring them back once they are gone. If we neglect them we shall be permanent losers for this life. We cannot say how much we may be the losers hereafter. But if we do what we can to use them while they are granted, we shall have learnt one lesson of the heavenly discipline, and shall be, we may hope, the better prepared for the others, whether of action or endurance, which are yet to come.

COURTEOUS CHILDREN.—In Mexico a group of lads from seven to twelve will meet, and each boy will decorously lift his hat and salutations of extreme courtesy will be exchanged, and then comes the boyish chatter, the run, and the laughter, the same as anywhere. Boys here treat their elders with respect. An old man or woman is not the butt of the youth of Mexico; rather for the old people is reserved the shadiest seat under the trees in the park. A Mexican boy or girl on entering a room walks around among the company, shaking hands with all, and on leaving the room does the same. Urbanity is taught in the public school as arithmetic is at home. There is no one jostled in the street; the best seat in the horse-car is promptly given up to the ladies, who never fail gracefully to acknowledge the favour. I have never seen a Mexican gentleman, says a writer, fail to give his seat to a woman, whether she was richly or poorly dressed.

THE ANTIQUE WAIST.—It is said that the corset was not unknown to Rome, but it is clear that the Greek and Roman women as a whole were quite convinced that the human form was itself beautiful, so they made no attempt to disfigure it by compression or addition. Young girls were simply dressed, chastely yet elegantly, in the flowing stola, slightly open at the throat and occasionally falling in two sets of folds. On the eve of marriage they were clad in a white robe called the regilla. After that event they wore the girdle, which the Roman matrons generally placed immediately below the bosom. Sometimes it was a band, and at other times a cord tied in a bow. Among the Greeks the girdle was often placed lower down; occasionally the stola was bound about the bosom by a band passing over the right shoulder and under the left breast. This gave the right arm liberty for action, and it was only for this object, or for quick motion, that the waist-cord ever seems to have been drawn very tight. So little did the Greek and Roman women think of the waist that in great numbers of draped statues their mantles are so arranged as to hide it altogether.



## GLADYS LEIGH.

## CHAPTER XI.

To go back a little, and see how it fared with Lord Carew.

The weeks that had passed since Royal parted from Gladys Leigh had left their mark upon him.

Lord Carew looked a good three years older than when he arrived at Arle Priory; there was a grave air of abstraction on his face, an expression of scepticism about his handsome mouth.

It was not grief for his lost love that had brought this about; it was the thought that he had been deceived in her by one of the strangest misunderstandings that ever happened.

Royal had actually learned to believe that the Gladys he had worshipped never existed at all—that the girl he had thought almost an angel was of the earth earthy, a heartless coquette, ready to sell herself and her beauty to the highest bidder.

And the persons to blame for this mistake were the Pearsons.

When they came back to the Gables and heard of the step taken by their young relative their false pride was up in arms. Instead of answering inquiries for Gladys with the story of her independent spirit, they assured all questioners that she had left them to fulfil an engagement entered into before her father's death; in fact, if they did not say so in so many words, they gave everyone to understand that Gladys was engaged to be married, and had, therefore, left Mrs. Pearson's protection for that of her future husband's parents.

No tale loses by the telling. When, after three weeks' absence, Lord Carew returned to Fanshaw Castle, it was reported on all sides that the beautiful girl who had been Mrs. Pearson's guest was on the point of marriage with a nobleman.

It had been an old attachment, said the gossips, and on Sir Hubert's death the friends of the young nobleman had wished to draw back, but his constancy and persistency had gained the day, and now Miss Gladys Leigh was to be a peeress.

The only persons who could have contradicted this and told Royal the truth—Mrs. Carrand Lillian Adair—were purposely avoided by Lord Carew.

In his pride and sensitiveness Royal could not bear to speak the name of the girl who had so deceived him—he who had given to Gladys the strongest love of his being, who had been ready for her sake to stain his name with falsehood—he who had trusted her and worshipped her had been nothing but a plaything after all; during her temporary separation from her real lover she had amused herself by flirting with him, with the obscure lawyer, as she deemed him.

It was all over. Probably in the future, when her marriage opened the great world to her—probably when she was a peeress—he would have to meet her often, to touch her hand in the dance, to see her, perhaps, a guest in his wife's drawing-room, but the past infatuation would never return. He had loved her and been deceived; just in proportion to the strength of his love was the severity with which he judged her.

In the rebound of his feelings his thoughts of Barbara were kinder than they had ever been before.

His feverish dream of love was over, and he turned with relief to the calm, peaceful attachment which he decided was, after all, the best promise for wedded happiness.

He felt more tenderly towards his *fiancée*; he even reconsidered her wish that they should make their chief home at Arle. After all, why should his true, faithful wife be sacrificed in a sentimental pity for a girl who had deceived him? His duty was to Barbara, and he would fulfil it bravely, putting all thought

away of the fair, false coquette who had stolen his heart.

But it was not so easy; that sweet face with its blue grey eyes haunted him strangely. Waking and sleeping he seemed to see those dark eyes, that wealth of golden hair. At last he decided his best chance of forgetting her was to go and bask in the sunshine of his *fiancée's* society.

He was met by Barbara and her aunt. He was agreeably surprised in Mrs. Coniston; he had hardly expected to find a relation of the Ainalies a gentlewoman of the old school. He took to her at once.

He threw an additional warmth into his manner to Barbara, and tried hard to feel that with her beside him he was happy.

"I have not had time to invite any guests to meet you, Lord Carew," said his hostess, as the butler stood ready to show Royal to the bedrooms, "but we will discuss that matter this evening; for the present I am quite alone, save for Bab and my companion."

"Who counts for nothing!" said Bab, quickly.

"She is a nice girl," said Mrs. Coniston, warmly, "and very discreet. I can trust her not to disturb your tête-à-têtes."

"I suppose she's a juvenile old maid of fifty," thought Royal, as he followed Simmonds; "a giddy young creature with corkscrew ringlets, a whitish-brown complexion, and large waist, that's the general line of companions. As to her being young I have noticed old people invariably speak of middle-aged women as girls."

He dressed quickly, his eye taking in the tasteful finishing of the room, and his taste well pleased with the rare flowers on his table.

"Bab has had a hand in this," he thought to himself. "She is a dear girl, and I am very fond of her! What a mercy my engagement to her prevented my plunging further into that miserable infatuation!"

He quite forgot that his engagement had not prevented his being perfectly ready to plunge to any extremity, and that he had been restrained only by the steady refusal of the heartless coquette.

He had opened the door to go downstairs when he saw a slight figure stooping to pick up something from the ground. In spite of himself his heart beat quicker; he seemed to know by instinct who it was before they stood face to face. He felt certain that some strange fate had brought Gladys Leigh to Springfield Park.

"What brings you here?"

She had expected a very different greeting. That the man who had parted from her with passionate caresses should meet her after a few weeks' absence with words of cold, almost contemptuous, questioning, cut her to the very quick.

But Gladys Leigh was as proud as he. She knew now who "Mr. Lorraine" was; knew the strange link which had connected their histories.

It was not to her lover of other days, it was to the master of the Priory, to Barbara Ainalie's *fiancée*, that she answered,—

"I have been here some weeks."

Royal stared. How beautiful she was—how utterly superior to any woman he had ever met! But her loveliness only exasperated him.

He could not tell of the aching heart within. He judged by her bright eyes and dazzling beauty when he decided that what had left its mark on him for ever had been to her but the pastime of an hour.

"Do you mean that you are staying here?"

"Yes."

"Why in the world didn't you send me word you were here? I think you owe me that much."

Again the cruel words; the harsh tone pierced her very heart.

"Would it have kept you away?"

He stared at her.

"Can you ask it? Don't you know that in

spite of your falseness and treachery I would have shunned your presence as men shun mortal danger? Why didn't you, in common honesty, tell me?"

"How could I?" asked Gladys, simply. "You forget that little farce you enacted for my benefit. How could I tell that James Lorraine and Lord Carew of Arle Priory were one and the same?"

"You might have guessed it."

His tone puzzled her; there was nothing of love or tenderness about it, it was full of anger and contempt.

"The matter is easily ended," said Gladys, wearily; "you can go away."

"I cannot."

"Why not?"

"As Lady Barbara's future husband I am bound to give her pleasure my consideration!"

"I suppose so."

"You can go away."

"I cannot."

"You have already been here some weeks by your own admission. The most exacting hostess would understand that under the circumstances there were other claims on your time."

"You are talking nonsense," said Gladys. "You know quite well I am not Mrs. Coniston's guest."

"You said you were visiting here."

"I am paid so much a year to visit here now, Lord Carew. Won't you understand? I am Mrs. Coniston's companion!"

Tramp, tramp, tramp, the sound of footsteps—Lady Barbara is descending. Lord Carew and Gladys start apart like guilty things; the companion goes downstairs, Royal waits to greet his *fiancée*.

He knows from the serene, unruffled expression of her countenance she has seen nothing. How well she looks in her rich pink silk! What a stylish, attractive wife the fates have reserved for him!

And yet, oh! base ingratitude! Royal feels that golden hair and blue-grey eyes are his ideal of female loveliness. Gladys is a sorceress; he is glad he has broken with her for ever, and yet her face still seems to him fairest upon earth.

What did she mean by calling herself Mrs. Coniston's companion, she whom they tell him is so soon to be a peeress? Only some fresh deceit, some new deception! Oh! heaven! why has she such an angel face and such a demon's heart!

Lady Barbara let her hand touch his arm, and looked up at him confidentially.

"Royal, I want to speak to you."

"I am all attention, dear."

He calls her "dear" mechanically, almost as a matter of duty. He never used to do so, but to-night he means to show that fair, false siren how happy and content he is with his future bride.

"I fear you will be vexed. I wanted aunt to send her away, but she refused."

"Who?" asked Carew, sharply, hoping Barbara has not by any chance discovered his secret.

"Miss Leigh. Fancy aunt's companion is the daughter of that old spendthrift, Sir Hubert! Of course there is no real reason for your objecting to her presence, only you are so quixotic. I thought—"

"I think you overrated my quixotism, Bab. I don't suppose Miss Leigh and I shall trouble each other much."

"And you don't mind? I thought you would be quite annoyed."

"I am very much surprised."

"Why?"

"I heard on good authority that Miss Leigh would shortly be married to a nobleman."

"How strange! Why, there might be some truth after all in what Mary said!"

"Who is Mary, and what did she say?"

"Mary is my maid. Aunt and I were out all day yesterday, and Miss Leigh had a holiday. Mary happened to be out at dusk, and she declares she saw Miss Leigh in Lord

Norton's dog-cart, driving as intimately as if they were lovers."

Whatever relenting thoughts Royal had entertained vanished.

"That's it. I heard there was a difficulty with the family. I expect it's a private engagement, and she's just taken your aunt's situation to be near him."

"She can't see him very often," said Bab, thoughtfully. "It will just serve Lady Norton right."

"I like her, Bab. I should be sorry, for her sake, if Gerald made such a fool of himself."

Bab opened her eyes.

"Why, Carew, it is the thing of all others I thought you would approve—such utter disinterestedness for a nobleman to marry a penniless girl!"

"If she were a good girl."

Bab grew more and more perplexed.

"Do you mean Miss Leigh has done anything wrong? If so we ought to tell Aunt Penelope."

Royal shook his head.

"Not what the world would call wrong. Gladys Leigh is a heartless, deceitful coquette, that's all, Bab."

Bab felt audaciously happy. No need for her to fear Royal offering Miss Leigh an income after this. She entered the drawing-room on her lover's arm, looking perfectly radiant.

Mrs. Coniston introduced Gladys and her sometime lover. They met as strangers. Royal bowed low, but never offered his hand. Aunt Penelope thought him ultra-ceremonious. As for Gladys, the blow entered into her heart.

It was a very stately dinner. Lord Carew and his hostess made friends rapidly. Bab, pleased at their good understanding, left the conversation chiefly in their hands; but of the three no one spoke to Gladys. She sat among them, their equal as touching the creature comforts and her share of the servants' attendance, but, though among them, not of them. No one spoke to her. From the time she sat down until she followed Lady Barbara and her aunt back to the drawing-room not one remark was addressed to her.

Poor Gladys! she was young, and the isolation of her position tried her cruelly; she was proud, and her humiliation was very bitter; but the crowning blow seemed to have been struck when Lady Barbara, with a sudden fit of industry, insisted upon Gladys holding a skein of silk for her embroidery.

Gladys was short, the heiress tall; so while Lady Barbara reclined in a low chair, Gladys stood upright before her, the tangled skein supported on her slender hands.

It was a very tangled skein, and Bab was not clever at unravelling it. Weary yet from yesterday's unwonted fatigue, it seemed to Gladys her knees would give way under her. She could not stand motionless; as Lady Barbara desired, and was once or twice reproved sharply for fidgeting.

And so Royal found them.

The picture to him was one of exquisite pain. Barbara, in her rich silken robes, reclined luxuriously in a low chair; the slight, weary-looking figure of Gladys stood before her, patiently awaiting her bidding.

Royal resolved to break up the tableau; it was one which cost them all too much.

"Bab, won't you sing something?"

Did he think of his first *tête-à-tête* with Gladys, and how she had sung to him that strange, sad warning—

"Oh I love for a year, a week, a day,

But alas! for the love that loves away."

It was only four months ago; he could hardly have forgotten that evening. Certainly he looked steadily away from Miss Leigh as he made his request.

"Presently," said Lady Barbara, equably, "when I have finished winding this silk."

"Are you always so desperately industrious?"

Her answer was interrupted. Mrs. Coniston interposed,—

"I will wind the silk, Bab. It is your duty to amuse Lord Carew, you know."

A little demur, and this was effected. Barbara went to the piano, and Gladys crossed the room to Mrs. Coniston. But it struck Royal as a revelation.

How different two people might make the same thing appear!

Standing before Lady Barbara, Gladys had seemed in a position cruelly derogatory to her. Mrs. Coniston drew the girl down to a seat on the sofa beside herself, talked pleasantly of the unruly condition of the silk. The helping her was simply the kindly assistance one friend may lend to the other.

Lady Barbara had a sharp, metallic kind of voice, but it had been admirably trained. She sang *forte* and *piano* in all the correct places. Her singing would always command a certain amount of applause. It could never draw tears to the listener's eyes, or please the ear of a little child. It seemed to Royal to consist chiefly of noise and shakes.

When the first song came to an end he refrained carefully from demanding another. The coffee had come in then, and Gladys, her hands at last freed from the silk, began to pour it out.

Royal, in duty bound, carried the cups from the small gipsy table to Bab and her aunt as he took them from Gladys, and inadvertently their hands met; and the touch of her little fingers thrilled him through and through. Clearly, in spite of his awakening, Lord Carew was not tired of his folly yet.

Gladys retired early, the others lingered over the fire—Mrs. Coniston because she deemed it her duty to chaperone the lovers. For some time no one spoke, then the old lady said, gently,—

"How tired that poor child looked to-night?"

"Miss Leigh!" said Bab, crossly. "Well, she had only herself to thank for it; I expect she was rushing about after her pleasure all day yesterday."

"Have you known Miss Leigh long?" asked Royal.

"I never saw her until she came here; I used to know her family in old times. She is a good little creature."

Royal thought Mrs. Coniston the most easily deceived of old ladies.

"I suppose Barbara has told you of the link between myself and the Leighs?"

"Yes. Miss Leigh never mentions Arle. I fancy she frets a great deal over her father's death. You see, poor girl, he was all she had."

Lord Carew shook his head.

"She is engaged to be married."

"Are you sure?"

"I heard it on the authority of her nearest relation. I think there is no doubt of it."

"She might have told me."

"You must not betray me, Mrs. Coniston. I fancy there is some hitch with the young man's family, but I have no doubt it will all come right in time; meanwhile I am glad she has a comfortable home."

The days passed on; Mrs. Coniston fulfilled her plan of giving the lovers a great deal of liberty. She and Gladys never interrupted a *tête-à-tête*; it was wonderful how any two persons could live beneath the same roof and hold so little communication with each other as Gladys and Lord Carew; a formal bow night and morning was the extent of their interview.

Mrs. Coniston little guessed that she was hardly acting for her niece's happiness in affording the betrothed so many opportunities of seeing her alone. In company Royal admired Barbara and got on with her remarkably well; alone, he could never think of anything to say. Could the orange drawing-room have told tales it would have revealed how very silent the lovers were during the long hours they spent there. Royal discovered that he and his fiancée had not a taste or sentiment in common. She had no sympathy with his pursuits; her ideas seemed only

whatever the *Court Journal* or latest article on the fashions had given to her. It occurred to Lord Carew that his future wife was literally only one of those elegant steel-plate engravings of the fashions endowed with life. And he must spend all his days with her—must have no dearer companion than herself!

He was rich, that was about the only comfortable feature in the arrangement. When once they were married he need not see so very much of Barbara; they could fill their house with guests and travel half the year. If Heaven sent him children, and they had more soul than their mother, in time to come they might fill up some of the void in his life.

"But at least she is loyal and true," Royal concluded to himself, when he had been reviewing his prospects of domestic bliss: "Bab may not be brilliant or fascinating, but she has a good, kind, womanly heart; she wouldn't win a man's love for the plaything of an hour."

When Lord Carew had been a fortnight at Springfield Park an invitation came for him to accompany the ladies there on a short visit to some friends at Riversdale. They were to dine and sleep on Tuesday, returning late the following afternoon. The affair was talked of for days beforehand, and so Gladys, who felt herself just pining away for want of a little kindness, wrote a short note to Lady Norton.

She did not ask for an invitation, she merely told of Mrs. Coniston's approaching absence. The reply came by return of post. Lady Norton would drive over herself at five o'clock to fetch Miss Leigh to the Abbey; then they could plan some pleasure for the next day, and there should be no difficulty about the return; Miss Leigh should be at Springfield quite early.

The morning of their departure Royal was astonished at the change in Gladys; her pale, sad face had almost shaken his distrust of her the last few days, now she seemed transfigured as by some sudden joy.

"You will have a dull time, dear, I fear," said Mrs. Coniston, pleasantly; "we shall not be home before to-morrow night."

"Oh! I shall be all right," said Gladys, with a strange smile on her lips.

"How shall you amuse yourself?"

It was the first time Royal had spoken to her since their meeting on the stairs; the sound of his voice brought the crimson blushes to her cheek.

"I shall be well amused," she said, coldly.

"I do not think you would care to know how."

Her manner was peculiar, Lady Barbara shrugged her shoulders, Mrs. Coniston looked grave, but both of them attributed the rudeness of the speech to the fact that it was made to the new master of Arle. They never dreamed that these two who met as strangers, who avoided even the most ordinary interviews, had once been passionate lovers.

"Don't overwalk yourself," said Mrs. Coniston, as though recollecting something. "You are not strong, Miss Leigh, and fatigue is not good for you."

"She is strong enough," said Barbara, when Gladys had left the room. "I think she cultivates that delicate appearance under the impression it is becoming."

"Something about her is becoming," said Mrs. Coniston. "I don't think you would find a prettier girl in all the county than Gladys Leigh."

Barbara pouted.

"Do you hear, Lord Carew? Aunt Penelope actually considers Miss Leigh pretty!"

"And don't you?"

"Certainly not; she has not a single good feature in her face. Of course her eyes are large, but then she is so thin they seem too big for her face. I suppose some people would admire her complexion, but to my mind it's much too suggestive of a consumptive heroine in a novel."

"Her mother died of consumption," said



Mrs. Coniston, quietly, "consumption brought on by a broken heart."

Royal winced; he had little cause to like the heartless little coquette who had trifled with his love, but somehow he could not bear to think of her as fading away beneath the most insidious disease in England.

"But she is not pretty," persisted Barbara.

"Now do you think so, Royal?"

"I should never call her pretty," he replied.

"Well, you and Barbara have odd tastes," said Mrs. Coniston; "unless, indeed, you are bound to see everything with each other's eyes just now."

"You did not let me finish, Mrs. Coniston," said Royal, smiling at her. "I was going to say I should never call Miss Leigh pretty, because she is far more. She has the loveliest face I ever saw."

Dead silence. Royal felt almost as though he had thrown a bombshell at his companions; then he saw a well-placed twinkle in the old lady's eyes, and knew he should only have one aggrieved person to console.

"Have I offended you, Bab?" he asked, an hour later, when they were well on their way, and all his efforts had not contrived to win a smile from the straight, regular features of his fiancée.

"Oh, dear, no!"

Mrs. Coniston was nodding comfortably in her corner; to all intents and purposes the lovers were alone. Royal took Barbara's firm, plump hand and said, coaxingly,—

"What is the matter, Bab?"

"Nothing."

"My dear, do you know you look as melancholy as possible, and you have not spoken a word for the last three miles?"

"You ought to know the reason."

"What have I done?"

"Insulted me."

"Bab!"

"You said Gladys Leigh had the loveliest face you had ever seen."

"Well, so she has."

This was worse and worse.

"It is not usual," said Barbara, coldly, "for a man to entertain his fiancée with rhapsodies about another woman's beauty!"

Royal saw his mistake. "My dear Bab, I never thought of your taking up the matter like this."

"It is enough to make me."

"I don't see it. You are my future wife, Bab, not Miss Leigh; it is you I have chosen to be my own for all time, and I tell you plainly I would not for the world that you should resemble Gladys Leigh."

Barbara was completely mollified, and entirely regained her good-humour; but the little incident had set Royal thinking. He found his fiancée hardly the calm, feminine paragon of domestic virtue he had believed her to be.

Just three-quarters of an hour after Mrs. Coniston had departed Gladys Leigh walked down to the Lodge gates, entered Lady Norton's carriage, and was driven to the Abbey.

"You will have to put up with an old woman's society, Miss Leigh," said the hostess, pleasantly. "My son has gone to dine at Riversdale."

But when they reached home they found Lord Norton waiting to hand them out. He smiled at his mother, and said he had got off his engagement.

"I couldn't face Mrs. Coniston and her niece," he said, comically. "I am a fearful coward. Do you know, Miss Leigh, I put off calling on my friend Carew from day to day because I can't bring myself to the point of encountering the heiress and her aunt?"

It was a very pleasant evening. Lord Norton and his mother had such a pity for the lonely girl. They tried so hard to make her forget her troubles, and to warm her in the sunshine of their own happiness; that for a few brief hours Gladys forgot her load of care, and permitted herself to enjoy the gladness around her.

"I think Carew means to cut me," re-

marked Lord Norton, after dinner, when they were sitting in the drawing-room waiting for the carriage to come round. "I wrote and asked him to come over, and he has taken not the slightest notice of my letter."

"Perhaps his fiancée can't spare him," suggested Lady Norton, gently. "Are they a very devoted couple, Miss Leigh?"

"I don't know."

"You don't know; but you have been in the same house with them for three weeks!"

"I see very little of them."

"You don't mean they banish you from their society?"

"I generally sit with Mrs. Coniston. She has given up the orange drawing-room to them."

Gladys came to an abrupt stop. Lord Norton kindly finished her sentence.

"To be affectionate in. Well, I think Carew a great deal too good for Lady Barbara."

"I don't know."

"Don't you like him?"

"I think he hates me."

The tears welled up in her beautiful eyes.

"Do you know he never speaks to me? Ever since we were introduced he has ignored me. He has snatched and mumbled, but he has never said one word to me since this morning!"

"I hope it was a courteous word, then?"

"It was a warning to spend the time of their absence profitably. That is the only time we have exchanged a word since Mrs. Coniston introduced us."

"How strange!" said Lady Norton.

"It's not like Carew," declared Gerald.

"He is a duke's son," said Gladys, "and I am only a penniless companion; only he need not treat me like the dirt beneath his feet."

"He must be acting under Lady Bab's instructions."

"Gerald," said Lady Norton, when their little guest had gone back to Springfield in the brougham; "I love that child."

Gerald smiled half-sadly.

"What would you say if I repeated your sentiment, mother?"

His mother stared.

"You don't mean—"

"I mean that it was love at first sight. When I came upon her, a little lonely figure lost in the November twilight, I knew that I had found my fate at last."

"And you have told her so?"

"Told her so after two interviews? I could not be so rash. Gladys Leigh will never be won by such wooing as that. Only I wanted you to know it, mother; I should feel as if I were deceiving you, somehow, if I let you go on bringing her here without knowing that it was my dearest hope this place should be her home for always."

"I am not surprised, Gerald, she has such a sweet, wistful face."

"And you are content, mother?"

"I am more than content, dear. I should rejoice more than I can say to know that you had such a fair and charming wife."

Gerald sighed.

"It is my dream," he said, slowly. "Fancy, mother, hers is the only face I have ever longed to win for my own, and yet I feel whenever I see her how faint my chance is."

"Nay, you are too faint-hearted."

"I don't know. Her smile is the sweetest I ever saw, and yet it is full of sadness. It strikes me sometimes, mother, that Gladys Leigh has done her loving."

It was the very thought that had come into Lady Norton's mind when she first spoke to Gladys, but she would not dwell on it now.

"Don't stake your hopes on her," she said, slowly, "until you know more. Gerald, I couldn't bear for you to be disappointed!"

He smiled.

"The mischief is done, mother, I'm afraid. You know I told you it was love at first sight."

"But if—"

He understood her meaning.

"I am not a coward, mother; life has been so fair and prosperous to me that I should be a craven to let one blow blight my future. If I fail in winning Gladys I can still rejoice my love went out to one so good and true; I can at least devote myself to her, and make her happy in her own way if not in mine. But we will not think of failure yet, mother. Did I hear you arrange for her to come to us tomorrow?"

"Yes. Mrs. Coniston will not return till five. It may be our last chance of having a visit from Gladys for some time."

The morrow came, a lovely December day, the air crisp and frosty, the sky clear and bright, just the ideal of a winter's morning.

The carriage brought Gladys early to the Abbey, and she spent a very pleasant time with Lady Norton.

Gerald was to drive her home—the groom in attendance; and, as it was so fine, they proposed to walk the last three miles.

Gladys, with her bitter secret, had no thought of love or courtship. She liked Lord Norton because he was kind to her, and kindness was so rare nowadays; but if he had been old and grey, the father of a family, given the same kindness, her liking would have been just the same.

He knew how to interest her without any "love-making." He told her many a story of his travels; he spoke of the sisters he had lost, and the aching void in his mother's heart.

"It is very seldom she takes a fancy to a young lady. She seems always thinking of our forgetting her lost ones. I have never seen her so interested in any one as she is in you. It will be a real kindness, Miss Leigh, if you will give her your leisure hours."

"And what will it be to me?" asked Gladys, wistfully. "Your mother is so good and kind I always feel happy when I am near her."

Gerald smiled.

"You cannot come too often. I hope Mrs. Coniston and the lovers will often make visits, and leave your time at your own disposal."

"I don't think Lord Carew will be at the Park much longer."

"When is the wedding?"

"In the spring."

"In the spring?" said Gerald, thoughtfully.

"It is a pleasant time for weddings."

"I don't think so."

At this point a tall, handsome man, who had been watching the pair from a distance, himself unseen, came a little nearer, so that, though still hidden by a friendly hedge, he could hear every word they said.

"Then, what time do you prefer?"

"January," was the prompt reply. "I think it must be nice to begin a new life with the new year."

"January," said Gerald, thoughtfully. "Perhaps you are right. I shall tell my mother what you said about her; it will please her."

"If I could only do something for her in return for all she has done for me!"

"You may be able to some day; the opportunity is sure to come. And now we must say good-bye."

They were standing close to the Lodge; they had stood there ever since the stranger had caught sight of them; but the time might have been an hour for all the silent watcher knew.

"Good-bye," said Gladys; "you have made me very happy. You will not forget?"

He held her hand in his; he bent his handsome head as he talked with her. There was nothing in his words, nothing in his manner the most prudish young lady could have been annoyed at; and yet, viewed from a distance, viewed with jealous eyes, that parting might readily have seemed the leave-taking of lovers.

Gerald turned back towards his home. Gladys passed through the lodge gates, and hurried on, for it was past four, and she



[HAD BAB CAUGHT SIGHT OF HER LOVER WITH THAT SLENDER FIGURE CLINGING TO HIS ARM?]

wished to be indoors some little time before Mrs. Coniston arrived.

"Stop! I must speak to you, for your own sake. You shall listen to me."

She stopped as one spell-bound. Lord Carew was at her side. Whence he sprang from she had no idea, but he was there, looking at her with grieved, angry eyes.

"I am willing to listen," said Gladys, quietly. "I deny your right to speak to me, but I will hear you out, just for the old sake's sake."

"The old sake's sake! and you dare to speak of that?"

"Yes," said Gladys, passionately; "it is strange, isn't it, that after suffering the cruellest insults at your hands, that after witnessing day after day your ostentatious devotion to another, it is strange, I say, that after all this I should care to remember the days when you said you loved me."

"When I said I loved you! Gladys, that love was no idle form of speech—it was a cruel reality. I loved you as few women are loved until—"

"Until reason conquered your infatuation—"

"No," he said, sternly; "until I heard you had left your cousin's house to fulfil an engagement formed before your father's death."

"I left the Gables to come here to be Mrs. Coniston's companion."

"They said you left to be married."

"And you believed it?"

"Of course I did."

"Your faith was not worth much," said Gladys, bitterly. "Of course I see it all. My cousins, in their false pride, could not endure the thought that I was earning my own living. I had procured an 'engagement'—they took care people should suppose it a matrimonial one."

"Then you never were engaged?"

Never—no one ever spoke a word of love to me but yourself. You must have had scanty

faith in me, Lord Carew, or surely you would have gone to Miss Adair, the friend you yourself found for me. She could have told you the kind of engagement that took me from the Gables."

"I shunned her. I could not bear to see anyone who had known you, Gladys. I had no claim on you, yet it maddened me to believe that while you listened to my love you were another's promised wife."

Gladys began to soften.

"I shall never be anyone's promised wife," she said, slowly.

"Not Lord Norton's?"

"I have seen him three times. His mother has been an angel to me. I think it is only her kindness that has kept my heart from breaking all through that wretched week."

"Mrs. Pearson gave out you were engaged to a nobleman. When I saw you with Norton I thought—"

"You will never need to think that of anyone," said Gladys, with that sad, weary tone in her voice. "Can't you understand I have suffered too much from love ever to love again?"

"You have suffered. Oh! Gladys, think what my torture has been. I believed you false. I tried to believe I had killed my love for you, and cared only for Barbara. I have had to play the rôle of the lover under your very eyes."

"And you must go on."

"Gladys."

"Just because I am not the weak, worthless creature you believed me you must not break your word. Every barrier between us that existed when we parted in Lord Fanshaw's grounds exists now."

"But—"

"You must go on," she said, slowly, "as you have begun, only with this difference—you need not go out of your way to show me you despise me."

"I despise myself. Gladys, can you ever forgive me?"

She was a true woman—quick to make excuses for the man she loved.

"It was not your fault—you were mistaken only your scorn was hard to bear."

"You shall never have to bear it again, Gladys. Darling, fate parts us cruelly, but nothing in the world can change my love. Barbara Ainslie may bear my name, but I shall go down to my grave, Gladys, loving you and you only."

They had reached the terrace steps when a carriage swept swiftly by. In it were the Lady Barbara and her aunt. Had Bab caught sight of her lover with that slender figure clinging to his arm, those sweet, tear-laden eyes gazing tenderly into his?

Who can say?

(To be continued.)

TREAT your wife always with respect; it will procure respect for you, not only from her, but from all that observe it. Never use a slightest expression to her, not even in jest; it may end in angry earnest. Be studious in your profession, and you will be rich. Be industrious and frugal, and you will be healthy.

EMBLEM OF SLAVERY.—At the marriage of Napoleon I. with the Austrian archduchess, upon receiving the benediction ring, he asked, "Why did not the Empress Josephine give me a ring?" The reply was, "Because, sire, it is the custom in France that only the bridegroom gives the ring." "Ah!" said Napoleon, "that is good," and whispered in M. Pradt's ear, "But do you know why the women receive the ring? It is a custom founded on the Roman law, which ordained that all slaves should wear rings; and, as the women are our slaves, they ought to wear this badge of servitude."





["FORGIVE ME IF I HAVE SEEMED COLD," HE SAYS; "I THINK I HAVE PLAYED THE POOL."]

## NOVELETTE.]

## MISS IMPUDENCE.

—O—

## CHAPTER I.

"MY DEAR JEFF,—

"What was my offence that you should banish me to this 'one-eyed hole'? Surely you have no conception of its real nature, or even your adamant heart would feel some relentings. Mrs. Spencer, of course, is very nice, but one can get tired of 'elderly niceness,' especially when it belongs to one's own sex. From morning to night there is nothing to do save knocking croquet balls aimlessly across a lawn as big as a dinner-plate, or sitting by the windows watching the stray passers.

"Sometimes we are edified by the sight of a drove of pigs, driven by a bucolic individual clad in cords and a blue blouse. There is a piano of antiquated look and tone, and a few old novels where the heroines are all Belindas and Matildas, and the heroes are given to weeping and protesting in a decidedly sickening way. Mrs. Spencer regards them as works of genius, and wonders what charm I can find in Dickens, Thackeray, Besant, and others. She actually admires Trollope; but that's because he is prosy.

"Stanton actually boasts two churches—the one St. Michael, the other All Saints'. We attend All Saints', which is the nearest to Ferndale Villa—about a mile off. Of course, you know Mr. Guthrie is the vicar of All Saints', and a hard time he has of it, although the parish consists in all of a hundred souls—not minus bodies, for the Stantonites incline to corpulency. The choir consists of three—'choristers' they call them—all men, and all bass, so you can guess the effect. When Mr. Guthrie has read the lessons he hurries down the chancel and officiates as organist, and after the sermon he does the same. The

vicar of St. Michael's is away, so Mr. Guthrie does double duty, and his wife does not help him in the least, and she could, because she is really a good musician. You would be grieved to see the sort of woman your old friend has married. Although I despair of doing her charms full justice, I'll try my poor best.

"She is very tall, and most magnificently proportioned; handsome in a masculine way, and very freckled. She wears her hair cut quite short behind and frizzled in front like a negro's, only *her* hair is red; even her best friends could not conscientiously call it chestnut. If she were at all a nice sort of woman I would show her how to arrange her hair as I do mine.

"She cultivates a masculine style of dress—'masher' collars, deerstalker hats, and a whip, which she is not slow to use upon the canine followers who accompany her in her walks. She rides with the hounds, and here I must confess she is a splendid horsewoman, can ride as straight across country as the most inveterate old hunter, and takes such leaps as would turn my hair grey with fright.

"She has her suite of apartments at the Vicarage, and Mr. Guthrie has his, and each has his or her own servants. I have dined once with Mrs. Guthrie, and she sent a formal message to her husband to join us, which he did. It was an uncomfortable evening, although he did his best to make it otherwise. Why in the name of all that's reasonable did he marry this griffin?

"By way of dissipation, and when Mrs. Spencer sees 'discontent sits heavy on my soul,' we drive to St. Dreda, which you know is only six miles off. When I first came here I anticipated some fun in visiting the city; but, oh! I was disappointed above all powers of description. Beyond the cathedral there is nothing to see, and the city has only one decent street in it. I could have cried with disgust.

"There isn't an eligible young man for five miles round. There is, however, a decent youth, who has the felicity to call Mrs. Spencer 'godmother,' and occasionally varies the monotony by teeing with us and endeavouring to interest me in the geography of the surrounding country.

"If I stay here long I shall become as prim as your brotherly soul can desire, and as antiquated as Methusaleh. The fashions are those of the ark; the breeding conspicuous by its absence. Dear old Jeff, the May term is over, surely Cambridge would be a nice and secure place for me to spend the vac. There are no wolves there now, walking about in sheep's clothing, seeking whom they may devour. For pity's sake, say I may come to you! The reading men who form your circle of acquaintances won't notice such an insignificant morsel as I.—Your affectionate, but dejected,

"LINDA."

"There!" ejaculated Geoffrey Freestone, Fellow of Christ College, Cambridge, and private tutor, "what do you say to that effusion, Haviland?"

"Poor little soul!" says the younger man, half laughing, half earnest, "it must be terribly dull for her. Why don't you have her here? Your 'diggings' are very comfortable."

"What *am* I to do with a girl of eighteen?" half vexedly. "I can't shut her up like a nun, and she could not possibly figure in Cambridge without a *chaperone*."

"Even those are obtainable for money. And it is a shame to bury so pretty a girl as Miss Freestone in the country! For ought you know she may be marrying some clownish farmer to get away from her present life; and then her lot would be most cruel. I see here she speaks of some fellow as 'a decent youth,' and he frowns slightly. 'Really, Freestone, you should go down and make some better arrangement for her.'"

"I won't have a hired companion disturbing the privacy of my apartments; and you know

very well Linda is neither old nor demure enough to receive my guests. Why, all the *habitués* of these rooms are young men! It would never do, Haviland; it would never do. But I don't like to think of the child being so horribly lonely. I tell you what we'll do. We'll ride over to Stanton this afternoon and see her. That is, of course, if you care to."

"I should like it immensely, as I've a few unoccupied hours."

"Very well. I'll go down to Newman's and order the horses. Come back here to lunch, and then we can start at three precisely."

The afternoon was warm and bright, and the prospect of a long canter very pleasant. The men mounted in good spirits and clattered down the stony streets, until at last the town was left behind, and they reached a broad, level road.

Swithin Haviland looked round with a disgusted expression.

"What beastly scenery!" he said. "There isn't even so much as a rise for miles round; and nothing in the way of timber but a scarce poplar, or a few pollards. Cambridgeshire is the ugliest county I have ever yet had the privilege of visiting."

"Oh! I rather like this wide sweep of country; and I've never been accustomed to a hilly district. But Linda complains loudly of the flatness. You see, she was educated in North Wales, and she doesn't appreciate this change in the landscape."

"I should think not, indeed! I say, Freestone, what sort of woman is Mrs. Spencer, and where did you pick her up? Is she a distant connection?"

"Oh! no; only an old friend of my mother's, who kindly offered to receive Linda into her home. She is a nice old lady, with a pretty face, surrounded by silvery curls; a trifle precise, and given to over-estimating the value of the properties; but gentle and kindly to a wonderful degree."

"You're a Goth to shut a mere child up in such a place, and with no other society. I really think, Freestone, you should try to put yourself in your sister's place, and imagine what such a life as she describes must be."

"Oh!—laughing—" you always wore her champion, upholding her in all her tricks and little rebellions; the anecdotes you related too were scarcely calculated to teach her to love the proprieties. You're not great at useful information for the young."

"That is certainly not my forte," drily, "and as for small children, I think I hate them. The only thing of which I am ashamed in all my life is that I was once a horrid little boy and a nuisance to all who came near me."

After that they ride on in silence for a time, each busy with his own thoughts, for certainly the scene is not calculated to engross much of their attention; on either side are miles of flat fields, with low hedges, and narrow ditches surrounding them; before them lies the smooth, level road, so wearisome in its unvaried monotony that Swithin Haviland may well be pardoned sundry exclamations of impatience; its only merit is that it is in capital condition.

"A nice lively road for a fellow to travel day after day!" says Swithin, "especially in a carrier's cart; he would experience all the joys of linked sweetness long drawn out."

Geoffrey wakes up from some abstract mental problem.

"Eh! What?" he asks. "I beg your pardon, old boy, but I really had lost myself in a maze of figures. What did you say?"

"I was only anathematizing this delightful country. By Jove, here's a village! I wonder what the natives are like? Do you think it probable they have emerged from the monkey state?"

"In appearance—yes," responded Geoffrey, sarcastically. "I won't answer for the intellect. Look at that old woman picking sticks, did you ever see a more deplorably ugly and withered face? I wonder what folks

do in these out-of-the-way places during the winter months?"

"Hibernates of course, and the wisest thing they can do."

About half-past four they reach Stanton, or rather the railway station, which lies a mile and three-quarters from the village; next they pass St. Michael's and then the one row of cottages comes in view. Beyond them is the Parsonage, and still further on a small, pretty, two-storied house known as Ferndale Villa. There is a smooth lawn with neat flower-beds and narrow paths, surrounded by a thick growth of laurels and chestnuts; beyond these the kitchen garden.

Hearing the clatter of hoofs outside, Mrs. Spencer, who sat knitting before a window, looks up, and as her eyes rest upon Geoffrey rises hurriedly and goes out to meet him.

"My dear boy," she says, trembling and blushing like a young girl, "this is an unexpected pleasure; introduce me to your friend, my dear. How very pleased Linda will be."

The young men alight, and giving their horses into the charge of the man of all work enter the garden with the old lady.

"Where is Linda?" asks Geoffrey, surprised that she does not come to meet him.

"In the kitchen garden, I believe; I hope, Geoffrey, you will not think me too indolgent, but she dear child had set her mind upon having a hammock, and I did not like to release her, although in my young days it would have been thought unladylike to possess such a thing."

Geoffrey assures her that he is glad she has gratified his sister's wish, and Swithin, falling in the rear, makes a comical noise as he thinks what a dreary thing life must be for a young girl in this primitive place, and with so precise a chaperone.

Mrs. Spencer opens the little gate leading from the lawn to the kitchen garden, and there, between two elders, the young men saw a suspicious yellow-covered book in her hand. At the sound of their steps she looks up, utters a cry of delight, and springs out with the agility of a squirrel.

"Oh, Jeff! Jeff! this is good; I am positively dying of loneliness and dulness. Mr. Haviland, I am very glad to see you again. Oh! don't look so shocked dear, Mrs. Spencer; Mrs. Haviland and I are such old friends."

"My dear Linda, you must remember great freedom of speech is not becoming in a young girl. You are very thoughtless—but Mr. Haviland will doubtless remember you are young."

"I like Miss Linda best as she is," the young man interposes, "one rarely meets a really frank and unaffected girl now;" and he smiles as he glances at Linda, who has reddened violently, and wears a rebellious expression.

He places himself beside her, and they turn towards the lawn, leaving the others to follow.

"I think Geoffrey has come to propose some alteration in your mode of life," he begins, thinking how pretty she is growing, and how beautiful are the expressive dark eyes lifted to his. "It is really a shame to keep you immured in such a 'one-eyed hole' as this." Then noticing her mortified start, "Yes, Miss Linda, I read your letter, and I fully sympathized with you. No eligible young man, no fun, no flirting, and no books; save old world-ones, but what is this?" touching the novel she carries. "It looks wonderfully modern."

"Kate Coventry. I borrowed it this morning of Mr. Guthrie; he has kindly told me I may draw upon his library when and how I please."

"And you don't 'hit it off,' as we say, with his wife?"

Linda shrugs her shoulders.

"Indeed, no; she is simply hateful. We never meet but I feel an insane inclination to declare battle. I seem to have known her a lifetime, and yet I've been here only a fort-

night. We stayed in Essex three months with some relations of Mrs. Spencer's, who drove me nearly mad with their parochial tea-parties and bazaars. The first were horrible in their tedium, the second were such 'catch-pennies'—such regular swindles—that I was ashamed to offer the articles for sale."

"You surely must be cultivating tenderness of conscience!" Swithin says, laughing. "Why, all those who go to bazaars know they go to be cheated—so what blame attaches to the stall-keepers? By this way, Miss Linda, I have prepared a tremendous lecture for you."

"Pray keep it for another time," with mock horror. "Believe me, Mrs. Spencer is very good at that sort of thing. What terrible thing have I done?"

"Forgotten me, erased my name from the list of your acquaintances—"

"Indeed, I have not," indignantly. "Why should you suppose such a thing?"

"In the old days, when you wore short frocks (I believe you call them frocks) I was your best friend; but now you are promoted to long ones, and a bang, you utterly ignore me, and send me no friendly message, even though your letters are of an uncommon length. Why is it?" and pausing, he places his hands upon the girl's shoulders.

"I thought you wouldn't care to hear from me," she answers, blushing furiously; "but I've often wished I could go back to the old days when I was Miss Impudence, and you were—you were—"

"I was what?" he questions, as she hesitates, and there is a gleam of fun in the dark, gray eyes that meet hers with so kindly an expression.

"You were Saint Swithin," she answers, breaking into a merry laugh. "What fun we used to have! And how shocked poor Geoffrey used to be! He said I was running wild, and must have 'proper care and attention.' I freely confess that if I undergo very much treatment of this kind I shall elope with the first travelling tinker who does me the honour to propose to me."

"Linda! Linda!" remonstrates Mrs. Spencer from behind them, "you will shock Mr. Haviland."

"I don't think she will, madam," the young man answers, laughing, and adds something *sotto voce* not very complimentary to the old lady's ears. Then he draws the girl away to an arbour in a remote corner. "Do you think, Miss Impudence, it would be very difficult to call me Swithin now?"

"Very difficult," she says, shaking her head; "solely on account of its impropriety."

"Hang propriety!"

"With all my heart," she rejoins, laughing at his energetic tone.

"Why should you not grant my request?" earnestly. "Is it because you dislike me?"

"Oh! no," coolly, "for I think you rather nice than otherwise."

"You are not changed in the slightest, unless, indeed, you have grown prettier, and a trifle more roguish."

"Geoffrey would say 'pert,' but then he is my brother, which makes a difference."

She leans over the paling separating the house from the road, and looks out with discontented eyes on the unlovely sweep of level land.

"How I hate the fens," she says, in low but energetic tones. "I believe if I stay here much longer, I shall become an incurable maniac. Morning, noon, and night follow each other so monotonously, each marked by the same routine of duties; there isn't the ghost of a chance of getting into mischief even if one wishes it. Surely, Mr. Haviland, you will use your influence to persuade Geoffrey it is for my welfare I should return to Cambridge?"

"I am afraid I can do but little, although I should be glad to have your society during the long vacation. There are so few nice girls at Cambridge that a fellow can get a chance of really knowing."



"But there are the lady students. Don't they find favour with you?"

"No, for they are amongst the most unlovely ones of earth, and the most unkempt," and he glances down at the trim figure beside him with appreciative eyes.

Linda beats a tattoo upon the palms, but otherwise is quiet, and Swithin Haviland is quite content to watch the dark, piquant face with its wonderful eyes; but suddenly she moves, and says, softly,—

"Oh! the world is surely coming to an end! See, here are Mr. and Mrs. Guthrie actually walking together. Let us hide behind the elders, or we shall have to endure endless questions and untold tortures from her."

They make at once for the friendly shelter, but Mrs. Guthrie's keen grey eyes have already espied them, and she calls to Linda in a strident voice to wait their coming.

The girl shrugs her shoulders as if in resignation of her fate, and turns with her companion to meet the rector and his wife.

"Handsome" is the correct word to apply to the latter, although she is freckled terribly, and her hair is so bright a red that an irreverent yokel called it "carrotty;" but the eyes are too light, the lashes almost white; the thin, cruel lips accord well with the finely-arched Roman nose, and her figure is perfection itself.

She greets Linda with a certain amount of masculine brusquerie,—

"You evidently wished to avoid me, but I don't usually allow my friends to outwit me thus. Perhaps you will introduce me to your companion."

Linda at once complies, although with very bad grace, and opens the gate to admit the new-comers, whilst Swithin finds himself wondering what could have induced Guthrie to marry this loud-voiced, cruel-looking woman.

He goes before with her, Linda following with Oliver Guthrie, whose stern, sad face softens as he speaks to the girl beside him.

On the little lawn Harriet Guthrie turns hastily, and addresses Linda once more.

"I came really to ask you to dine at the Rectory to-morrow; young Eddison and a few others will be there, and you will be quite a godsend, as presentable girls are scarce in this uncivilised neighbourhood."

The invite is almost a command in its insolent bluntness, and Linda's face flushes duski.

"Of course it remains for Mrs. Spencer to accept or decline the invite," she says, swiftly. "I neither have, nor wish to have any voice in the matter," and she begins to talk gaily with Mr. Guthrie.

The rector's wife mentally takes Swithin's measure, then she remarks,—

"It is a great pity such a pretty girl as Linda Freestone should be so flippant. I believe she would flirt with the veriest clown Stanton boasts—even married men are fash for her net."

The hot indignant blood flushes the young man's face, as he answers the lady coldly,—

"I think you are forming a wrong estimate of Miss Freestone's character. She is 'free without fastness'; the sort of girl most men admire and so scarcely meet. And demure or reserved girls always were my aversion, for I remember the old saying, 'Still waters run deep,' and Heaven preserve me from a quiet, cunning woman."

Mrs. Guthrie smiles contemptuously,—

"I should have known you would utterly disagree with me in my opinion of Miss Freestone. You are a young man yet, and a pretty face is still of more value to you than a good heart under a homely exterior."

Then Mrs. Spencer joins them, and presently they drift apart; but when Swithin is eagerly engaged in talking "shop" to Geoffrey, the rector's wife moves near them and says, in a quietly meaning voice,—

"Look at your friend's sister and Mr. Guthrie; they have evidently no ears or eyes for us."

The girl's bright face is flushed, her eyes sparkling, for Oliver Guthrie is telling her he is planning an excursion to Cambridge, in which all the elite of Stanton are to share. They will have a drag, he says, and go down to do the town. In all his wretched days there comes no gleam of sunshine to this stern-faced man, save when he talks with this girl, who reminds him so forcibly of a dear, dead sister that the liking he has for Linda is very nearly akin to that of an elder brother. No thought of misconstruction of words or deeds ever crosses his mind or Linda's; they are totally blind to the angry disfavour with which Harriet Guthrie regards their friendship. She has no love for her husband; she never had; and she knows that each time he glances at her he remembers the diabolical treachery by which she won him. She had been very poor before her marriage and had loathed her poverty, longed for the "flash-pots" of Egypt with all the longing of her selfish heart.

Then Oliver Guthrie had appeared at the gloomy old parsonage in the character of her sister's lover! He was young and fairly good-looking; of gentle birth and possessed of a large income; her sister had gone out into the world as nursery governess, and in her absence it was easy to separate the lovers by cunning and strategy; easier still to compromise Oliver so far with herself, that being an honourable man he felt himself compelled to offer her marriage. They were married by special license, and as they were starting for Switzerland the younger sister suddenly appeared on the scene, and all Harriet's treachery was discovered. From that hour Oliver thrust her from his side, and grew hard and stern in the endeavour to crush down his unhappy love for the gentle Laurie Conybeare.

Bound for life to a woman he could only despise and dislike, feeling his yoke press more heavily upon him each day, he yet had a kindly word for all, and bore himself, if not cheerfully, yet calmly before his little world.

A hero! Yes, although no blast of trumpets proclaimed him conqueror, no nation delighted to do him honour; a hero, because of daily trials uncomplainingly borne, because of endurance that never faltered or failed him.

As Swithin looks towards him and then upon Linda the jealous thoughts, the foolish doubts Mrs. Guthrie has roused within him, flame into quicker, keener life, and when he takes his leave it is with a distant courtesy that wounds the girl. She gives him but the tips of her fingers, and says good-bye frigidly, but her heart is beating faster than it should, and she has a mad longing to cry out to him to show her some pity. But when he has gone a little way his heart reproaches him for his harshness, and turning his horse's head he rides back to the gate, where Linda stands with saddened face.

"Forgive me if I have seemed cold," he says. "I think I have played the fool."

Then as he rides away he sees her face gleaming bright in the setting sun.

## CHAPTER II.

AUGUST, and so intensely hot that Swithin Haviland mentally anathematises the heat, and wishes he could be transported to some region totally unknown to the sun. He has travelled this road many a time since he travelled over it first with Geoffrey Freestone. Linda's bright eyes have been the magnet that has lured him again and again to Stanton; and Geoffrey, deep in mathematical problems, is glad to believe that he will soon be relieved from any responsibility concerning his sister. If his friend loves her, well and good. Swithin Haviland is an honourable gentleman, and if he is satisfied with Miss Impudence as she is let him take her, for even supposing she should disappoint him he

would never allow her to read that in his face, or voice, or manner.

So Geoffrey buries himself in his books, and half forgets Linda, and wholly ignores the fact that she may crave for a more active, more pleasurable life. He does not mean to be selfish or neglectful, and yet he is both, and but for Swithin these long summer days would be intolerable to the girl.

She begins to look eagerly for his coming, to count the hours which must elapse before their next meeting. She takes a new pride in herself and her appearance; she trims and orders her dainty dresses with pretty, bright ribbons and laces, and carols like a lark about the house. In vain Mrs. Spencer preaches propriety and ladylike "do-nothing-ness;" in vain she extols the manner of a bygone age; Linda laughs, and goes on her way rejoicing. What matters it who condemns her, if he is pleased? And because she will not shame him in the future, she returns to old, half-forgotten studies with an assiduity and eagerness that surprise Mrs. Spencer and her very real friend Oliver Guthrie.

On this August afternoon Swithin rides up to the little low, whitewashed inn, and giving his horse into the landlord's charge, walks towards Ferndale Villa. There is no shade on the dusty white road, no overhanging boughs to shelter him, and he looks round upon the level, low-lying fields, utterly bare of timber, with strongest disfavour. But at last he reaches Mrs. Spencer's gate, and his heart beats hot and fast. He passes in—a flash on his face, and a bright light in his eyes.

There is no one waiting or watching on the lawn or at any window, and he begins to feel a vague sense of neglect. He passes into the kitchen garden, and there he sees Linda lying in her hammock, with Mrs. Spencer quietly knitting beside her, and Oliver Guthrie reading to them from that inimitable little book, "Uncle Remus."

Mrs. Guthrie's words return to him with horrible clearness, and a very passion of jealousy consumes him. "What if Linda loves this man, or if she wiles away her weary time in foolish and capable flirtation with him?" Well, in that case she is no fit wife for me," the young man thinks, savagely, and yet there is an awful ache in his heart.

He pauses and looks at her with burning eyes. How pretty she is with that flush upon her cheek, the smile parting her ripe, red lips, and displaying her white, small teeth to advantage!

With a muttered imprecation on Guthrie, Swithin goes forward, and hearing his hasty step upon the path Linda looks up. Surely the swift, glad light in her eyes, the involuntary welcoming gesture she makes should satisfy even his jealous heart? But he will not be easily appeased, and his manner towards Guthrie is so brusque that the girl feels almost ashamed of him, and Guthrie, feeling himself *de trop*, soon takes his leave.

Swithin moves uneasily from time to time, and devoutly wishes Mrs. Spencer at the antipodes, for she shows no inclination to leave him alone with Linda; so at last he asks desperately,—

"May I have ten minutes with Miss Freestone?"

"Certainly," in a somewhat scandalised tone, for she thinks this way of proceeding very unorthodox; "as Mr. Freestone does not object to such a departure from etiquette it is not my province to do so," and she begins to roll up her knitting with such methodical slowness that Swithin is fain to take her by the shoulders and push her through the little gate.

But at last they are alone, and the girl glances anxiously into the young man's face.

"What is it?" she asks, trying to affect a careless tone; "you look simply terrific; I had no idea you could assume so brigand-like a scowl!"

His steady eyes are bent upon her with stern

regard, and the line of his lips is straight and almost cruel.

"You have given me cause for anger," he says at last, and his tone is hard. "I hoped you were not so much the slave of coquetry, not so thirsty for admiration, as I find you are."

Her face flushes, and her great, dark eyes flash indignantly upon him.

"I will not pretend to misunderstand you," she says, quietly; "and allow me to remark that your own mind must be sadly warped to allow you so to misjudge me."

She turns from him with a proud gesture, so unlike the Linda he has known hitherto, that he scarcely recognises her, and regards her with unmitigated astonishment. He has seen her playful, petulant, provoking, but never dignified or seriously angry; and in his heart he says unjustly,—

"Her conscience accuses her, and she is enraged that I have learned her secret."

As she moves from him he does not seek to follow her, and she will not vouchsafe him a glance.

His miserable eyes are full of mingled condemnation and pain; his face looks wan and drawn in the dazzling glare of the August sun; his hands hang clenched by his sides, for he loves the girl with all the force and fervour of a fiery heart. And when she has reached the little gate he lifts his voice and calls her name, "Linda."

But she will not look back, and he cannot guess that blinding tears are raining down her cheeks, or that the lips quiver piteously as they seek to frame his dear name, coupled with the plaint,—

"How can he think so lightly of me?"

In her own room at last, and now she angrily dashes away her tears.

"What a fool I am!" she says, stamping her little foot. "What a fool I am to fret because he chooses to misjudge me; if he thinks so lightly of me it were well to let him go. How dare he so insult me?"

But such reflections as these do not tend to lessen the ache in her heart, or make her hold him less dear.

Later on a message comes from Mrs. Spencer that Mr. Haviland is waiting for her to make his adieu; and Linda, still angry and hurt, scribbles back the reply.

"Tell Mr. Haviland that I won't see him, and I trust he will never come here again," which message Mrs. Spencer softens until it runs thus,—

"Miss Freestone regrets that a severe headache compels her to decline seeing Mr. Haviland again to-day."

But the young man can read between the lines, and he rides back to Cambridge in a very miserable state of mind. Angry with himself and Linda, doubting her, yet loving her, he reaches his own chambers, and, shutting the doors, gives himself up to very bitter reflections.

But, as the night wears on, gentler thoughts, more kindly feelings, come to him. He remembers how young and how lovely Linda is, how monotonously life goes on at Ferndale Villa, with the kindly-intentioned, but fearfully "proper" Mrs. Spencer, and arrives at the conclusion that Geoffrey has been a fool and a brute to immure his pretty, impulsive sister in such a place as Stanton.

With the morning comes a return of his pride, and a new assertion of what he is pleased to call his dignity; and he determines not to see Linda again until she chooses to make some advance towards friendship, and some acknowledgment of her wrong-doing.

But no sign reaches him from her, no word of entreaty or command, though he looks for both at every postal delivery. He does not yet understand that for fortitude and patience few men can compete with women; and so he chafes and frets under the delay and suspense, and at last, in an angry mood, orders out his horse and rides to Stanton.

No Linda meets him in the garden; looking over the gate he can just discern her ham-

mock, but it is empty. No gay, soft voice gives him welcome, no hands are outstretched in eager greeting; and he trembles a little at the thought that his obstinacy and folly have estranged her heart from him for all time. As he enters the Hall Mrs. Spencer meets him.

"I am pleased to see you again, Mr. Haviland. I was afraid Linda had in some way offended you, she is so very brusque at times. We shall find her in the drawing-room, I believe; she has recently made that her favourite resort."

Swithin goes with her, his heart beating tumultuously. In an easy chair, with her feet resting upon a tiny ottoman, is Linda, apparently busy, hemming some muslin frills. A faint flush steals into her cheeks, which before were very pale, and she rises languidly to greet the young man, scarcely deigning to touch his outstretched hand with her finger tips.

"You are quite a stranger, Mr. Haviland?" she says, with the polite indifference of a society woman. "Mrs. Spencer was beginning to despair of seeing you again."

"And you?" he questions, in a low, eager voice; for now he is with her he forgets all save the fact that he loves her.

She turns her beautiful dark eyes full upon him with well-assumed surprise.

"I!" she says slowly. "I think I scarcely remembered you, or noticed your absence at all. Why should I?"

"Why should you!" echoing her words bitterly. "You have other friends who prove more entertaining than I, although, perhaps, it would be wiser to treat them with the frigidity you assume towards me."

"I assume nothing, Mr. Haviland. Mrs. Spencer constantly informs me that candour is my besetting sin. If I were capable of deception I might hope to please her better."

"My dear Linda!" cries the elder lady, flushing deeply. "You should not say such things. You will give Mr. Haviland a very mistaken idea of my character. Pray remember, I advise truth in all things; but—"

"But truth softened and toned down until it is wonderfully like fiction."

Perhaps it is just as well that at this moment Mrs. Spencer is called away, for there is an angry flush on the lady's face that bodes ill for Linda's peace.

As soon as the door closes upon her, Swithin moves nearer to the half-recumbent figure.

"Linda," he says, entreatingly, "shall we agree to forget all that passed the other day?"

She lifts her pretty brows with feigned surprise.

"I had forgotten until you chose to recall the silly quarrel. Pray believe I am most sorry that I was tempted to anger by your very foolish accusation."

Not the way this certainly to cement the peace that he desires. What has happened to the girl so to change and mar her?

Swithin looks down upon her with a dark flush upon his face.

"You are trifling with me, and pretending an indifference you do not feel concerning my opinion of your conduct. If you were neither angry nor guilty you would meet me as you have always done."

She laughs coquettishly.

"Poor thing! does it think itself ill-treated? Must it be coaxed into good humour? Is its dignity so sorely affronted?"

He suddenly takes her hands in a close grip.

"You shall not evade me thus. You have allowed me to pay you such attentions as an honest man pays only to the woman he desires to marry. You have given me reason to believe myself not quite distasteful to you; now, I say, you shall tell me what you mean to do with me."

Just a moment her pale face flushes, and her great dark eyes grow soft with love and longing; then the little head is proudly poised, the red lips grow scornful, and her voice, though low, is clear and ringing.

"I regret that you should love me, because

loving me, you doubt me; have thought bitter and evil things of me. If ever I marry (which the saints forbid!) I trust my husband may have implicit faith in my modesty and prudence. Are you answered, Mr. Haviland, or must I say more?"

"Oh! I am well answered," bitterly. "I was a fool to cast my whole heart upon one who could not, or would not, appreciate my love at its true worth."

"I am not prepared to deny your self-accusation," she answers, with a mocking smile, "although such wholesale self-vilifying is apt to be spasmodic."

"Will you deny that you loved me once if you do not love me now?" he asks fiercely.

No answer from the girl, who sits with averted face and down-dropped lids.

"Why are you silent?" he questions, passionately. "Are you suddenly dumb?"

Linda moves, so that her face is bent full upon him.

"When fools speak wise men hold their tongues," she says, with a sage nod, and breaks into a mirthless laugh that yet does duty for merriment.

Swithin mutters something that sounds very like a curse.

"You madden me," he says, hoarsely; "can nothing touch you? You remind me of some words I once read. Shall I tell you them?"

"If it pleases you to do so, Mr. Haviland, as an orator is a novelty."

Flushing dusky under her scoff he says rapidly,—

"Thou hast trod on a heart.

Pass—there's a world full of men;

And women as fair as thou art

Must do such things now and then."

As he pauses she drops her chin in her lowered palm, and surveys him reflectively.

"Your elocution is perfect," she says, "but your expression bad."

He flings himself on his knees beside her, so that he can encircle her with his arms.

"Look at me," he commands, "look at me, and tell me that I am less than nothing to you. I know I deserve your anger, your scorn, but you should make some allowance for a jealous man. Linda, Linda! say you have been trifling with me this morning—give me a little hope that at last I may win, not only your forgiveness, but your love!"

Just a moment she sways towards him: just a moment her face is near to his, her breath upon his brow; but then Mrs. Spencer's step is heard outside, and she shrinks back, whilst he rises angry and baffled.

Though he stays long there is no second chance of speech, and when at last he takes his leave Linda is in her most impudent mood, and will vouchsafe him no kindly word or loving glance, so that he returns to Cambridge disconsolate and savage.

But in the pretty drawing-room Linda sits with folded hands and demurely lowered lids, listening not a trifle disdainfully to Mrs. Spencer's strictures upon her conduct.

"You know, my dear," says this estimable lady, "men invariably detest a sharp-tongued woman, and if you would marry well you must exercise your wit less."

"You mean to imply the poor creatures hate to be made to feel their stupidity?" asks Linda, with a sudden smile breaking the curve of her lips. "It is good of you to be so lenient to their foibles and failings."

Mrs. Spencer sighs dejectedly.

"I shall never make a society woman of you. I wish Geoffrey's choice of a chaperone had fallen on any but myself."

"I've often wished the same," Miss Impudence says, saucily, "because I think none but yourself would be content to live in such a deadly lively place as Stanton. There"—seeing the clouds gather on Mrs. Spencer's face—"I didn't mean to hurt you, but really you must make some allowance for a girl's love of



gaiety—you can't expect me to care for the things that satisfy you! Don't you remember a time when you took pleasure in fun and— and coquetry?"

Mrs. Spencer is silent, for she *does* remember such a time; and there was one who figured conspicuously in it, who had been very dear to her. But she was weak, and allowed her mother to "preach down" her heart "with a little hoard of maxims." She sighs as she remembers these things, and the pain she had inflicted upon the youth who loved her more truly than she deserved; and a tenderer feeling than she has hitherto experienced for Linda fills her heart. She leans forward and kisses the girl's soft cheek.

At the unwonted caress all the fire and defiance die out of the great brown eyes, and impulsively throwing her arms about Mrs. Spencer's neck she says,—

"Why are you not always kind to me? Don't you know I am so easy to lead, so hard to drive? And think how lonely I am! I have no one to love me but Jeff, and his books are a thousand times dearer to him than I. Tell me truly now, and I know you never spare me"—archly—"do you think my manner towards Mr. Guthrie too free? Is there anything in it that savours of coquetry?"

"My dear, no," in a shocked tone. "Why do you ask such a question?"

"Because Mr. Haviland and I have quarrelled upon that point, and of course I am incapable of judging my own conduct impartially."

"I am more grieved than I can tell, and can advise nothing but avoidance of Mr. Guthrie in the future. His visits were very pleasant, and his friendship desirable, but we must forbid the one and forego the other if Mr. Haviland objects to either."

"I shall do nothing of the kind," Miss Impudence retorts, hotly; "that would be equivalent to owning myself guilty," and, rising, she goes to her room.

She is very restless, but not at all unhappy, for has not Swithin confessed he loves her? And when he has suffered sufficiently for his cruel and undeserved strictures she will take him into her favour, and recompense him for all his pains.

"The stupid, jealous old boy!" she murmurs, softly, "how could I guess he would be so absurd? Well, it won't do to play a submissive part *now*, or I may have to play it all my life long."

The next morning comes bright and clear. There is no cloud to stain the deep azure of the sky, and the birds are all astir among the deep green leaves of the overhanging boughs. Even the wide stretch of level land is lovely in the glorious sunshine, and a soft breeze stirs the waving barley until it ripples and whispers as the sea does on a still day.

Linda rises with a light heart, and a joyful anticipation of "a good time," for to-day she is to join a picnicking-party organised by a certain Mrs. Eddison, mother of the "decent youth" she had once written of. She dresses hastily, fastening the claret ribbons of her pale pink dress with all possible speed; then she adjusts a great white hat with drooping feathers on the masses of her dark hair, and, catching up a pair of gloves, runs downstairs.

"My dear," says Mrs. Spencer, "you have not yet breakfasted!"

"I'm too excited to eat, but I will have a cup of coffee, please. And if Mr. Haviland rides over tell him I shall be at home for callers to-morrow."

"Won't you leave a note to that effect?"

"No, no! Why should I? He deserves to be punished severely for his late misconduct," laughing; "and in future I intend to follow your advice, and hold myself dearer than I have yet done. Listen—I can hear the drag coming, and I'm sure it is young Eddison performing on the horn—he always 'tootles' so dreadfully."

She runs lightly down the garden, and waits at the gate until the drag draws up in

fine style close beside her. Then genial voices greet her, and young Eddison leaves "tootling" at the horn to assist her to her seat. She decides to share the box with the driver, a very sporting young doctor, who has no thought for anything or any creature save the horses at this moment before him. Mrs. Guthrie acknowledges her by a frigid bow, and glances significantly at her next neighbour, when the vicar shakes hands and exchanges some pleasant remark with her. But Linda is far too indifferent to the lady's smile or frown to notice either, or to allow her to interfere in any way with her enjoyment.

After a drive of nine miles they reach Raycroft's Dell, the only really pretty spot the county boasts; and then follows a stampede for the baskets and hamper, and flirtation holds high carnival amongst the younger members of the party. Riotous laughter, harmless practical jokes, horrible puns, make the moments pass swiftly, and by the time the cloth is laid for luncheon it is two o'clock.

Flushed and tired (for she has been busy with the fire) Linda seats herself between the young doctor and Mr. Guthrie, and as the former is too engrossed with the contents of his plate to notice her she naturally declines upon Oliver for amusement.

Harriet Guthrie's face momentarily darkens, and she whispers significantly to Mrs. Eddison, who repeats her remarks to the next lady; for, to tell the truth, Linda is not a great favourite with the Stanton people, being too candid, and too pronounced in opinions to please them. Unheeding these signs of gathering coldness and condemnation she rattles on until luncheon ends, and then joins an exploring party, Oliver Guthrie being one of the number.

In some way, and quite inadvertently, they are soon separated from their companions, and seeing this, remembering Swithin's jealousy, the girl proposes a hasty return, and Oliver lifts his voice to call the others. But no answer comes to his shouts, and they turn their faces towards Raycroft's Dell, Linda remarking that a storm is coming up. The sky is now overcast with clouds, and, as she has brought neither umbrella nor wrap, she anticipates "a good drenching rain" with anything but satisfaction. They hurry on in silence for a time, but presently the first heavy drops of rain begin to fall, and the thunder mutters overhead.

"We're in for it now," Oliver says, glancing anxiously at his companion's thin dress, taking note, too, of the dainty shoes; "tuck up your skirts, and let us make a run for it."

"Stay, just one moment, Mr. Guthrie, I've nothing spoilsome on, except my hat, and I am going to take care of that," with which she pauses and draws her pretty frilled skirt over it; then laughing at him from the pink folds, she starts at a brisk run for shelter. Faster and faster falls the rain, more heavily rolls the thunder, and the lightning flashes luridly around and about them.

"You can't go on like this, Miss Freestone!" says Oliver, "we must take shelter at the nearest cottage."

"But the others will be getting anxious about us," she urges, nervously, afraid of exciting any remarks on their prolonged absence.

"They will guess we have been wise enough to wait until the worst is over," he answers, with no suspicion of her dismay, or the evil things his wife may think and say of them. "And," with a smile, "I shall have a heavy account to settle with Mr. Haviland if you suffer from exposure to the weather," with which he leads her to a tiny and by no means cleanly cottage. Still, any shelter is acceptable, and Linda sinks gratefully upon the chair offered her, and begins to fan herself vigorously.

Still the rain patters down as though a second deluge has come. Linda looks out ruefully, then smooths the wet folds of her dress, takes off her hat, and inspects it carefully.

"Any damage done to it?" Oliver asks, smiling at her unveiled anxiety.

"No," after a minute inspection. "I am thankful to say no, for I shall not get another new hat until the autumn. As it is, Jeff exclaims loudly at what he calls my extravagance. Oh, dear; how I wish the rain would cease, it will be quite dark before we reach Stanton."

"Oh! there ought to be a moon—perhaps will; we must hope so."

Half-an-hour drags on, and then the down-pour, though still heavy, certainly decreases. Linda starts up.

"I won't stay here a moment longer, Mr. Guthrie; let us start at once."

The woman of the house offers the girl a shawl of many colours, which she gratefully accepts, promising to return it the following day; and drawing her skirts close about her, shielding her precious hat under the shawl, she steps out bravely into the rain. In almost utter silence they reach Raycroft's Dell to find the horses already harnessed, and as many of the miserable, wet pleasure-seekers as can get inside the drag crowded there. Harriet Guthrie is outside, and the expression of her face is not good to see as the trunks appear.

"Where have you been?" Mrs. Eddison exclaimed sharply, being wet and tired too; "we've waited for you nearly an hour."

"We took shelter in a cottage," Oliver answers, preparing to assist Linda to a seat. "I'm sorry our day should have such an infelicitous ending."

"You have a curious way of separating yourself from other members of the party," Harriet says, so significantly that all eyes are turned upon Linda, who flushes crimson. "I am glad, Miss Freestone, you find my husband so pleasant a companion; amiability is not his favourite virtue at home."

At the abominable taste of her remark even the sporting doctor is stirred to indignation. "Beastly woman," he mutters, and fixes curious eyes on Linda who has now grown very pale, but who stays Oliver's angry words by a gesture.

"Do not insult me so far as to defend me," she says, "Mrs. Eddison, may I sit by you?"

And in uncomfortable silence they drive home. Mrs. Spencer greets the girl with anxious inquiries which she stops by saying hurriedly,—

"Let me alone, the day has been horrid," and bursts into tears.

### CHAPTER III.

In the morning Linda wakes with a burning sense of injury in her heart, and a feeling akin to shame, which threatens to keep her a prisoner in the house. She fancies that all Stanton is already agog with the story of yesterday—Mrs. Guthrie's insane jealousy, and her implied penchant for Oliver.

Neither are her fears without foundation; the rupture between the two ladies is soon the talk of the village, and when she walks with Mrs. Spencer curious eyes watch all her movements; and the envious ones, or the malicious, shrug their shoulders and say, "Miss Freestone was always a wild, bold girl," and warn both sons and daughters to avoid her society.

Linda grows very wretched, and the change in Swithin does not tend to make her less so; he has heard an exaggerated and garbled account of the matter, and jealousy tears at his heart, makes him a credulous listener. And yet he loves her! Ah! how he regrets the mad moment in which he disclosed his passion! Now he wishes he had never met her. His visits are very rare now; he would keep wholly from her if that were possible, but it is not an easy thing to wrench himself utterly and at once from all he had held most dear; besides which, in his heart there lingers a faint hope that he may yet learn he is mistaken.

Thus matters stand when the anniversary of the dedication of All Saints arrives. This is the one red-letter day in the year for the

Stantonites; and in a large meadow beyond the church all sorts of games go on, and the gentry for miles round come to witness them and encourage any athletic display.

It is a beautiful day at the close of August, and looking from her window Linda sees the gaily-dressed village lasses hurrying by with their sheepish-looking swains; matrons with toddling children, and even infants in arms; and men dressed in the black suits so dear to the country mind, and in which they look so unutterably absurd and ill at ease. She sighs a little.

"They are all happy—or apparently so. I wish I were one of them," she says; "it must be good to be born without heart or brain."

"Linda! Linda!" calls Mrs. Spencer at the foot of the staircase. "Are you ready?"

She opens her door.

"No; I am not going. It's of no use trying to persuade me to alter my decision; I am going to spend a quiet day at home. I hope you will enjoy yourself immensely," and much against her will, the lady is compelled to go alone.

Then Linda takes a book, and walks slowly to her favourite spot.

"I wonder if he will come to-day," she says, and deep down in her heart is the cry for Swithin. "If he does, I will try to pocket my pride, and tell him all; but even had he been guilty of any misdemeanour, I would not have believed it unless he confessed it to me himself!"

The book she carries is "Joseph's Coat," but it has no charm for her on this particular morning; her thoughts are all of and for Swithin, and the cloud that has fallen over their love. The long, hot hours wear by, heavy with her pain and fear; she loathes the sunlight, the songs of the birds, the scent of the flowers around sickened her. It is her first grief, and she has not yet learned patience.

"Oh!" she says, with a little sob; "I was happy until he came, and taught me what love is. I wish we had never met, with all my heart—I wish we had never met."

She lunches alone, and when the solitary meal is ended gives the maid, who has stayed behind to wait upon her, permission to go to the meadow; and, feeling very lonely and miserable, seats herself at the window and looks out, hoping for some amusement in the way of chance passers-by. The intense silence of the house renders her nervous, and she is heartily glad, although surprised, when she sees Mrs. Guthrie's maid, Lucille, enter the gate and come swiftly towards the house. She goes out to meet her.

"What is it, Lucille?" she asks kindly. "You have been walking fast. Come in and rest!"

"No, no, mees," the woman says, hurriedly. "Madam—I must return to madam; she is ill, and has sent me for you. All the other folks are in the field, and she would not alarm monsieur. She says she has been unwell to you, but you will forgive and come to her."

The girl pauses; the remembrance of Harriet Guthrie's shameful speech, and all the misery it has entailed, does not tend to soften her heart, and she can scarcely bring herself to visit the sufferer. The Frenchwoman reads all this in her mobile face, and spreading out her hands says,—

"Madam may die; it is the sunstroke—she asks always for you. Come, mees, for the sake of Christian love; she lies alone, and I fear to go back."

"I will come, Lucille. Go on before, and say I will follow quickly."

The maid hastens away, but she does not go in the direction of the Rectory. She returns to the meadow and joins the merry crowds, certain that in the bustle and pleasure her absence has not been noticed. She steals to her mistress's side, "She will be there, madam," and glides away, leaving Harriet Guthrie with a triumphant smile upon her cruel face.

Linda dresses hastily, not waiting for gloves

or sunshade, and hurries down the hot, dusty road, careless of any personal discomfort.

The thought of her enemy lying alone in her agony is rapidly dispersing all feelings of anger or hate, and she is conscious only of a vast pity. She reaches the Rectory, and pushing open the gate fairly runs up the drive. At the hall door she pauses; the unnatural stillness of the place frightens her, and her heart beats fast. She enters, and calls softly, "Lucille! Lucille!" and again in a louder voice, "Lucille, where are you?"

The library door opens, but it is Oliver and not Lucille who appears.

"Miss Freestone!" he says surprisedly, "what has happened? Pray come in."

Bewildered, and conscious of a vague alarm, she follows him into the library.

"I have come to see Mrs. Guthrie," she explains; "she sent for me, saying she was very ill."

"There must be some mistake," he says slowly, "I left her quite well but half-an-hour ago. An important letter was brought to me whilst on the field, and I returned to answer it; I was preparing to go back when you came in."

"There is no mistake," Linda answers, white to the lips; "but a conspiracy against us. It was Lucille herself who brought me the message."

Oliver grows as white as the girl.

"Go back at once," he says; "this matter shall be thoroughly sifted; and if my wife has any share in it—" he pauses remembering his vocation, and suddenly sinking into a chair covers his eyes with his hands, groaning bitterly, "Heaven forgive her if what I fear is true! and Heaven help me."

Linda looks on with wild and frightened eyes; the sight of the man's anguish is too terrible for her.

"Oh!" she cries, "don't take it so hardly, Mr. Guthrie. Perhaps—perhaps, after all, there has been a mistake! Good-bye, I am going now," and she turns towards the door.

But before she reaches it it is thrown suddenly open, and Harriet Guthrie enters, flushed, triumphant, cruel; behind her stands Mrs. Eddison, curious, and a little nervous. Harriet advances towards Linda.

"So," she says, in a low intense tone, "so, Miss Freestone, my suspicions were not unfounded, despite your indignant denial. At last I have proved myself an injured woman, and you a thing I will not name. Knowing you would find my husband alone you steal here to meet him—probably by appointment—in my absence, and the absence of any of the domestics. The plan was fairly concocted, but—"

"Madam," cries Oliver, forgetful of all, save Linda's jeopardy, "be silent. Miss Freestone came here in answer to a message from you, carried to her by your maid Lucille, purporting that you were ill and desired her presence. As you know I returned home to reply to an important communication."

Harriet burst into a harsh laugh.

"Your imagination runs riot; and I really did not credit you with such ready invention. Mrs. Eddison, bear me witness that I deny all Mr. Guthrie has said. To my knowledge my maid has not left the field since she entered it; I was not even aware that Mr. Guthrie had returned; I was tired and heated, and proposed we should leave the sports for awhile—in it not so?"

"Most certainly," answers Mrs. Eddison, regarding Linda with strong disfavour.

The girl springs forward, and speaks for the first time.

"You are lying!" she says, fiercely, "as truly as Heaven is my witness. Mr. Guthrie's story is the only one. Oh! Mrs. Eddison, dear madam, believe me; I am not the wretched creature you are tempted to believe me. In all innocence of heart I came here. Surely, surely, neither you nor that woman, my enemy, will take away my good name! Remember, it is my dearest treasure; without it what am I? Would you make me an

outcast? Would you turn my brother's heart against me?"

"I believe the evidence of my own eyesight," says Mrs. Eddison, coldly. "I am sorry for your brother, and most unfeignedly sorry for Mrs. Guthrie. For you I have no pity. You are a shameless girl, and to my mind are more to blame than he is," pointing a contemptuous finger at Oliver.

Linda is trembling violently, but she will not break down before Harriet. She rests her hands on the table to steady herself, and turning her white face full upon her enemy, says,—

"You may try your utmost to disgrace me, but in the end you will fail. Those who love me will take up my cause and fight out this matter, and your punishment will not be light."

"Will young Haviland hold his trust entire?" questions Harriet, scoffingly.

"The girl makes a swift gesture of the hand to the heart, then she says, slowly and concisely,—

"I am proud to believe he will. Allow me to pass, madam. No, Mr. Guthrie, I will not have your escort. To-morrow my brother will be here, and will examine Lucille in the presence of witnesses. I invite your attendance, Mrs. Eddison. You have bitterly misjudged me, you shall be shown your mistake," and she bows herself out.

Along the level, hot road she goes, her heart well-nigh breaking with her shame and pain, and the fear that Swithin may condemn her even as Mrs. Eddison has done.

In some way she reaches Ferndale Villa, and rushing up to her room flings herself upon her bed, and sobs bitterly that all things are so sorely against her, it would be well to die.

The golden afternoon wanes, the sun goes slowly sloping to the west, and then she hears steps upon the gravel path below, the hum of voices, the echo of light laughter, and knows the servants have returned.

Later on Mrs. Spencer enters her room, and then, lying face downwards, speaking in muffled tones, poor little Miss Impudence tells her story.

When she has ended, and no answer comes, she lifts her head, and sees in Mrs. Spencer's eyes, just the look of doubt and condemnation she has seen in Mrs. Eddison's, and flinging out her arms, she cries,—

"Leave me, leave me! You are as cruel as they. Go, I say. I want to see you no more!"

"I cannot express my grief and horror at this thing," the lady answers. "I shall write your brother to remove you at once; he can be here to-morrow. I must decline to let you remain longer, although, for your mother's sake, I wish I could."

"Do not speak of my mother!" the girl cries, harshly. "You are not worthy to use her name. She would have judged me justly—I have believed my simple word."

"I am not a partial judge, Linda," in cold, measured tones.

"Small need to tell me that," with bitter scorn. "I have known it too long already."

Then once more she is alone; alone to torture her heart with doubts and fears; to cry out to Swithin with passionate love and entreaty, to implore Heaven to clear her name before all her enemies and accusers, to make her brother's heart very tender towards her in her dire calamity.

Late in the evening Oliver calls and has an interview with Mrs. Spencer, which fails to change that lady's fixed belief; she thinks, "the girl has always been imprudent, and fond of flirtation; her story and Oliver Guthrie's are impudent inventions which no sober-minded person would credit."

The next morning comes, chill and wet; the fields look dreary enough stripped of their golden crops, and the few trees that break the level monotony of the landscape look but like saturated sponges to suck the fogs and rain up.

Linda regards all these familiar things with



weary eyes, swollen with much weeping. She does not leave her room, neither does Mrs. Spencer desire she should, having a nervous horror that some chance caller may meet her in the tiny reception rooms.

As the day wears by a great dread comes upon the girl that Geoffrey may see her conduct in the same light as Mrs. Spencer, and with each hour this fear increases.

The afternoon wanes, and gradually a white mist envelopes all the land. It is growing quite dark when the girl rises, and with hasty fingers begins to dress as if for walking.

Wrapping herself in a mackintosh, she opens the door and listens for awhile; all is very silent. She steals back to her table and writes a few words on a slip of paper; then softly goes out and creeps downstairs.

A careless maid has left the hall door ajar; she opens it, and rushes out into the blinding rain; across the lawn and narrow paths—careless of the storm—out on the high road, and now which way shall she turn?

All ways are alike to her, so that she leaves her trouble behind, and avoids that dreaded meeting with her brother.

She branches off into the fields, afraid of no bodily hurt now, on and on. The wind blows her to and fro. She has not stayed to secure her mackintosh, and now it is tossed from her shoulders, and borne away from her, and in the thick darkness she cannot find it.

Her limbs are numb, her clothes cling round her in heavy wet folds. She is too weary to go further; she must lie down to rest, and yet what resting-place is here?

With a last desperate effort she staggers on; a thousand voices are sounding in her ears, a terrible sensation of faintness seems to arrest the very beating of her heart; her voice breaks into gasping sobs; then she stumbles, and falls with her face upon her arms, and her last conscious thought is of Swithin. For the first time in all her strong young life she has fainted.

The night grows darker, and there is no one near to help her; to raise her heavy head, to kiss her pallid lips, and whisper words of loving trust.

And whilst she lies there unconscious Geoffrey reaches Ferndale Villa, stern of face, with severe, haggard eyes. Mrs. Spencer meets him in the hall.

"My dear," she says, "I would have spared you this had it been possible."

"I know," he answers, heavily. "You have always been good to me. Where is she?"

"In her room. I sent a message to her an hour since, but she would neither admit the maid nor reply to the message. You will absolve me of all knowledge of this dreadful affair, and believe I have done my duty honestly towards her?"

"Yes; she was always frivolous," the lines on his brow deepening, "but I did not believe her vicious. Let me see her at once."

There is no pity in his heart towards the helpless, lonely girl he had left so much to her own resources, no shadow of doubt as to her guilt in his mind. He is deeply mortified, terribly enraged that she should have disgraced their honourable name, and when she stands before him she will meet with scant mercy.

The man is too much absorbed in the scholar to feel any of that compassion for Linda (even were she guilty) that a more ordinary mind would experience.

He paces up and down the little room waiting Mrs. Spencer's return and Linda's coming. He scarcely knows what he shall say to her, or how he shall dispose of her.

"But at any rate," he thinks, savagely, "she shall not have a second opportunity of disgracing herself and me!"

Presently the door opens and Mrs. Spencer re-enters, a scared look in her eyes.

"My dear Geoffrey, she has gone, but I have found this," and she thrust a slip of paper into his hand. The words are few and to the purpose:—

"When you find this you will have heard all that Mrs. Spencer and other censorious folks can tell you; and I have a conviction you will doubt me as they have done. So I rid you now and for ever of one who has apparently so disgraced you. Think of me as kindly as you can, for our dead parents' sakes, whose places you were to fill. If Heaven in its mercy will take my life, you will not be more rejoiced than I, but remember that to the very last I shall protest my innocence and that of Mr. Guthrie."

"Linda."

To him it seems that her note savours only of defiance. He crushes it in his hand, and tosses it into the fire, which has been lit on account of the sudden inclemency of the weather.

"She can't have gone far," he says, frowning darkly. "I will go out and search for her. Was she not content with the shame she had worked, but she must add fresh anxieties to the load I bear, and must always bear, on her account? Mrs. Spencer, I would be glad to find her dead, provided she had not died by her own hand."

She shivers under his wrath, and asks, nervously,—

"Who will you take with you?"

"Is there no man about the place who will hold his peace about to-night's doings?"

"Yes, there is Goody, our odd job man; he lives at the cottage just below the church. Geoffrey, if you find her you will bring her back here?" questioningly.

"Where else should I take her? As for Guthrie, the knave! he knows he is safe, because any attempt to touch him will further degrade her," and without another word he strides out in search of Goody.

He finds him very easily, and the two men set out almost in silence to pursue the fugitive. Goody is a taciturn individual, and vouchsafes very few remarks, but all that he does make are to the point.

"Have yer any idea which way the young woman 'ud take, maister?" he asks.

"None," tersely.

"Well, it's much t' same as lookin' for a needle in a haystack. If I may make so bold as to offer my opinion, I should say goo back ter the villa, and maybe we can trace her steps, the ground bein' so mighty soft."

Following this excellent advice, because he is really incompetent to give better, Geoffrey finds himself once more at Mrs. Spencer's gate. Then Goody lowers his lantern, and examines the road carefully. Presently he looks up, a flash of triumph in his deepest-set, small grey eyes, as if he would say, "I told you so," but he merely remarks,—

"Them's her track, I guess," and points to the prints of dainty shoes.

"Follow them up," Geoffrey answers, shortly. Often they lose the trail, and have to retrace their steps; and when Goody at last declares they must branch out the fields across Geoffrey exclaims, in dismay,—

"She would surely not dare to cross them at night!"

"When a wench is despit she don't stick at nothin'; that's my experience."

Over the wide waste of desolate land, across a long stretch of stubble, they stumble blindly. Geoffrey is not remarkable for physical strength, and at last declares he can go no further.

"Just a few steps more, maister, and we'll catch our bird; she can't have gone on much longer. See, the marks are faint and uneven like, as if she were a goin' to drop."

A moment after he utters an exclamation, which brings Geoffrey to his side.

"Here she be," he says, and, with more tenderness than one might expect of him, he raises Linda's head. Even Geoffrey's heart might be touched with pity at her miserable plight. Poor little Miss Impudence! she lies prone in a ditch, her dainty clothing all soiled and dragged; hat and mackintosh alike gone, and her long dark hair blown about her white face. Goody lifts her in his arms.

"Carry the loight, maister, and I'll carry the lass;" and setting his face steadily homewards he follows Geoffrey, whose figure looms long and lean in the weird darkness of the night.

After what seems an eternity they reach Ferndale Villa, and Goody deposits the unconscious girl upon a couch, and receiving the wage of his labour departs without comment, only in his heart stirs some forgotten feeling of compassion for Linda.

It is very long before the colour steals into her face, or the dark lashes are uplifted; and as her eyes open wide and bewildered upon her brother's face she shivers away from him and cowers low upon the couch.

"So you have found me," she says, scarcely above a whisper. "I wanted to hide myself from you all. I wish I had died where I fell."

"Perhaps it would have been better for all," he answers heavily. "Heaven knows the disgrace you have brought upon me is almost too great for me."

"I have not disgraced you," she says feebly, being too faint and dejected to flame into passion. "How cruel you all are, and what a blind fool I was to run away from you! I should have known it would but confirm your suspicions of me. I should have remembered you have always been hard and intolerant."

"Have I ever denied you any wish it was in my power to grant?" he asks, fiercely.

"You have denied me love and sympathy. Oh Heaven! you are all leagued against me—against one poor, weak, defenceless girl, who has never done you any wrong. Tell me what you will do with me?"

"I cannot tell," moodily, "but to-morrow you will go with me to Cambridge, where I will think out what course I had best pursue with regard to you. You require stricter surveillance than Mrs. Spencer has seen fit to exercise."

At this juncture Mrs. Spencer advances.

"You had best go to bed, Linda," she says, coldly. "I am afraid your recent exposure may terminate in a serious illness. Let me assist you to your room."

"No," the girl answers, with a momentary flush of passion, "don't touch me, don't speak to me. You have poisoned my brother's mind against me, and I shall never forgive or forget." She rises wearily and holding by this or that article of furniture finds her way from the room.

In the morning she comes down heavy-eyed and white of face, but beyond a violent cold she has suffered no harm from her rash expedition, being very strong. Geoffrey and Mrs. Spencer greet her frigidly as she takes her place at the table. She drinks coffee with feverish thirst, but refuses to eat anything, and when the meal is ended she rises.

"I am going to dress," she says, addressing her brother. "I packed during the night; I could not sleep, and I could not be idle."

"Conscience doth make cowards of us all," he quotes, accusingly. She flashes a passionate glance at him.

"Your belief in and love for me are perfectly touching," she says, with a sneer.

"Rest assured they will always meet with my sincere gratitude;" and as she turns to go Oliver Guthrie is announced.

Her pale face flashes crimson.

"You have come to clear my name, but it is useless; my brother and Mrs. Spencer alike hold us guilty."

Oliver strides to the centre of the room.

"Freestone, you have known me long enough to be aware that the dastardly, villainous conduct you lay to my charge is impossible of me. I hold your sister in high esteem, and not only for your sake but her own. Her story is, alas, too true. My wife has developed a sudden and inexplicable jealousy of her, which, had I known sooner, I could have guarded against. For the sake of your manhood, by all our days of friendship, by the love you have, or should have, for this poor defenceless girl, give

her that trust and that protection she so sorely needs. Investigate this affair to the utmost both for her sake and mine."

"For *her* sake," Geoffrey answers, with a look of bitter hate, "I must hold my peace; and it is well for you that your cloth protects you."

Oliver's face grows white with passion and outraged honour.

"You do well to remind me of my profession," he says, in an intense tone, "otherwise you would have received the punishment you so richly merit. I think you are mad, Freestone, to believe the evil gossip of scandalous women. Miss Freestone, turning to Linda, "I will not rest until I have vindicated your name and my own. I will never forget all that you so unjustly are called upon to bear, and I shall find it hard to forgive those who have so bitterly wronged you."

He offers her his hand, but when she would place hers in it Geoffrey interposes,—

"No," he thunders, "not in my presence," and thrusts Linda away so forcibly that she would fall but that Oliver gives his ready help.

"You are mad or drunk," he says, contemptuously, and turns upon his heel.

Two hours later Linda is being driven to Cambridge. Now and again she glances into her brother's stern, accusing face, and each time her own insensibly hardens, until it bears a faint resemblance to his. Arrived at his chambers he gives her into his landlady's charge, and goes out to see Swithin, believing it to be his duty to disclose his sister's folly to her lover.

(To be concluded in our next.)

## BUT NOT OUR HEARTS.

### CHAPTER XIII.

The whole grounds were in a blaze from the light of thousands of coloured lamps as Jack and Ruby, with Opal and Billie, who had joined them at the lake, strolled slowly back to the lawn, and though the sun half barely set, so much artificial light made all around beyond its circle look dark.

A brilliant display of fireworks was going on, squibs shooting up to the sky, crackers going off, rockets banging about, catherine wheels whirling round, blue and red fire burning fiercely, at which some of the rustics were gazing in open-mouthed wonder, while others footed it away right merrily in the large marquee to the music dispensed by the village fiddlers—two blind Scotchmen—and a little boy who played a tin whistle in a wonderfully clever way.

Dancing also was the order of the evening inside Temple Dene as well as outside, only not of such a fast and furious kind. In the first place, they bumped, rushed, chased, and chivied up and down, here and there, in rather a frantic fashion. In the latter they glided, and reversed, and sailed round in a more stately manner, doubtless, however, not enjoying it half as much as the bumpkins did.

"Where have you been?" demanded Vane, sharply, as his daughter appeared in the drawing-room.

"At the lake," said Opal, with a half-timid glance at him.

"What were you doing there?"

"I was taking care of them," explained Rainham.

"Oh, were you?" said their father, not looking over well pleased, yet feeling he must not show his displeasure to the Rector's son.

"Yes. We were looking at the fireworks," piped Billie.

"Indeed? Quite time you went home, my boy," and the cold eyes froze the look of innocent pleasure on the child's face with their chill glance.

"Mayn't I stay?" he pleaded, looking

wistfully round the gaily-lighted room, with its crowd of dancers.

"No. I am going to look for your brothers, and send you back with them."

"Let him stay," interposed Spragg, who had come up unseen by the others.

"He is too young to stay up late," objected Vane.

"Once in a way won't hurt him," returned the other, "and you would have some difficulty in finding the others, as they are out in the grounds. My barouche is at your service when you wish to leave later on, so you will have no difficulty about getting home."

"Since you are so kind, then, he may remain."

"That's right. Now I must get you a partner, Miss Vane."

"I would rather look on, thank you."

"Really?" he asked, doubtfully.

"Yes, really."

"Won't you give me one by-and-by?"

"Yes, if you wish it."

"Thanks. I'll take number eight, if you'll keep it for me?" and as she bowed an assent he went off, and resigned himself to the not altogether palatable task of steering Mrs. Davidson's stout proportions round the length and breadth of the vast room.

"Why won't you dance now?" asked Vane, irritably.

"I don't care to."

"Why?"

"I am a little tired."

"What have you done to tire yourself? You should have reserved your strength for the evening. It looks conspicuous for you not to dance."

"I don't care for valseing with strangers."

"I have no doubt your fatigue would vanish if Chicherly were here," he sneered.

"It might," she agreed, quietly, while a flush rose to her cheek, for it struck her of late her father had been particularly disagreeable in his manner when alluding to Paul; and though she was timid and gentle in most things, where her lover was concerned, she could be fierce and determined. Her affection for him was so deep and powerful it altered her strangely, and she felt she could be almost like a tigress in fighting for him if it were necessary. "I dreadsay the pleasure of seeing him would make me feel so joyful that I should forget my fatigue."

"Ah! indeed. Quite delightful, this 'love's young dream' business! Hope it won't induce you to make a fool of yourself every time you come out, and transform you into a wall-flower."

"No, it will not do that; and I am going to dance with Mr. Spragg later on," she said, not wishing to vex him, and draw down a storm of unpleasant reproaches and complaints on her head.

"Mind you don't forget it," he ordered. "I will not allow you to affront our host."

"I have no intention of doing so."

"You had better not. He has the power to relieve and lighten the miseries I have endured during the past few years; mind that yours is not the hand that dashes the cup down from your father's lips."

And with this somewhat melodramatic speech he walked away, and went to do the polite to Lady Dorothy, who was seated with some other dowagers at the other end of the room.

"Ah! Copeland," she cried, as he approached, her eyes twinkling maliciously, "left your shell at last! What miracle has wrought this change?"

"Sake of the girls, you know," he muttered, not altogether well pleased at her sally.

"Sake of the girls! Pooh! Sake of yourself, you mean."

"No, on my word. They are growing up now, and having their interests at heart I give up the seclusion I love, and which is best fitted to my delicate health, and come out to chaperon them."

"Stuff!" with great contempt. "What is the use of talking that nonsense to me, eh?"

Might go down with a stranger. I know you too well. You've got some plot in your head. Don't tell me," as he made an attempt to speak. "Some plot to benefit yourself, and that's why you've dropped the recluse, and adopted the man of fashion once more. Take care, take care, though," shaking a withered finger, glittering with diamonds, at him, "that you don't overreach yourself. Interested people often do. Remember the tale of the hermit crab, who left his shell to find a better dwelling-place; and failing to do that, returned to find it smashed in atoms, and he a houseless, homeless wanderer. You wouldn't like that to be your plight, would you?"

"Certainly not," he rejoined, promptly, feeling that he would like to say all manner of offensive and disagreeable things to this nasty old woman, who would talk, to his intense dismay and annoyance, in a loud tone of voice.

But he dared not give vent to his feelings. He was poor, she was rich. She could do him a good turn if she chose, or a bad one. He was powerless to affect her in any way. She was Lady Dorothy Derwent, a woman of position and influence; he was plain Mr. Vane, with no position and no influence. The odds were all on her side, and she was merciless; and he had to pocket his affronted pride, and listen to her without any "outward and visible sign" of his inward extreme disgust.

"Humph! Then you ought to be careful," she continued, eyeing him keenly.

"About what?" he demanded, with an assumption of coolness and indifference he did not feel as he arranged the stephanotis and maidenhair in his buttonhole.

"About your plans. Going in for matrimony again?" she asked, suddenly, looking at the flower. "You're very dapper and smart."

"I have no intention of doing so at present," he responded.

"Think you haven't much chance?"

"Have not thought about it at all."

"Humph! Perhaps you had better, then. You're not a bad-looking man, Cope."

"Thanks for the compliment."

"You needn't thank me; I'd tell you you were ugly if I could. You know that."

"Yes, I know that."

"Well, I can't, so I tell you you're handsome and young-looking; an elegant fellow, and one that many women would be glad to say 'Yes' to."

"Not if they knew the narrowness of my income."

"Yes—yes, even with that," nodding her head till the jewelled stars in her scanty locks flashed again. "I wasn't talking of penniless lasses. I didn't for one instant imagine that you would marry for love at your time of life."

"No."

"You didn't exactly do that when you were young, did you?" with a chuckle that sounded diabolical in the ears of her victim, to whom Lady Dorothy was a sort of ancient mariner, from whose clutches there was no escape. "And you wouldn't be likely to do it now, eh?"

"At my time of life, of course, a man looks for something beyond mere—" he began.

"Love and good looks, and both of that kind, eh?" she interrupted. "Looks, in fact, for a little of the root of all evil, that filthy lucre, which is so much abused and yet so much sought after by all—young and old, rich and poor, the happy and the miserable, the ignorant and the wise. Well—well, one can't get along without it, and it makes a world of difference in our comfort here below; so I, for one, won't say you're wrong, Cope Vane, if you seek a well-dowered bride. Nay more, I might even try to find you one."

"That is very kind of you," he returned, with a suspicious glance, for he knew she hated him, and put as much faith in her offers of help and friendship as he would in those of a boa constrictor if he offered to take a nap with him and keep him warm in the meantime.



"Not at all," she disclaimed. "Now, there's one over there who might suit you, and she's been casting tender glances at you all the afternoon."

"Who is that?" he asked, indifferently.

"Mrs. Davidson, widow of the Nebraska silver mine man."

"Ah! Which is she?"

"That fine, fair woman with the yellow hair, in ruby velvet, talking to Mrs. Bevoir."

"Fat, fair, and forty quite," he laughed, as his eyes lighting on the gay widow, encountered a languishing look from the full eyes, "and, pardon me, I should term her hair red."

"Not in the least. It is pale auburn or ruddy gold, whichever you please, and I suppose she is thirty-eight or forty."

"At least. Her charms are rather full-blown."

"You are hypercritical for a man of your age."

"Not for a man of my age. Youths are not critical, men become so later on in life."

"You don't admire her, then?"

"I did not say so. She has a fine figure, and the remains of great good looks."

"And that is all, eh?"

"As far as I can see."

"Humph! That means that you can't see the gold pieces she possesses?"

"No, certainly I cannot at present. You see she is not hung about with them."

"She is with jewels, though."

"Yes, those pearls are fine."

"Very. By the way, Spragg is a good parti, isn't he?"

"Very I should say," he assented, warmly.

"Do for one of the girls, eh?"

"Opal, as you know, is not free," he rejoined, sententiously.

"That would make little difference to you, Cope, if the Yankee proposed," she said, with another abominable chuckle.

"My consent has been given to her engagement to young Chicherly, and however much I may regret the match I should not withdraw it unless under very special circumstances," he announced, with a great air of injured dignity.

"Pooh!" and she laughed in his face.

"Shall I take you into supper? I see they are going in," offering his arm.

"Yes, do. May as well make use of you. Where are the girls?"

"Opal is dancing with Rainham, and Spragg is introducing an extremely common-looking person to Ruby. One of his own particular friends, I should say."

"What is he like?"

"Short, red-haired, freckled, and vulgar."

"Ha! ha! ha!" chuckled her ladyship, gleefully. "Common, vulgar! Ha! ha! You don't know who it is?"

"No, how should I?"

"No, of course not. Well, that red-haired vulgar person is more of a catch almost than our host."

"Indeed. Who is he?"

"Augustus, Earl Mount Severn, Viscount Dunstan, Baron Trevelyn, with a good income to support his titles."

"Indeed!" The second "indeed" differed considerably from the first.

"Yes. You can take me into supper, with an easy mind, if, as I shrewdly suspect, you have left your shell in order to try and get Ruby a rich husband. That man will suit her admirably; he has no brains and plenty of money, and her head won't let her heart interfere with her mind. She is your own daughter, Cope Vane, your own daughter. You ought to be proud of her."

"I am," he replied, quietly, as he led her from the ball-room.

"Pleasaw, looking at yaw cawd," drawled the Earl, as the American introduced him to Ruby, "if I may."

"Certainly," she said, with a brilliant smile, as she relinquished her programme. Here was someone worthy all her best dimples and most brilliant glances—a noble-

man, actually a nobleman, and one of high degree too. What mattered it that his face put her in mind of the gnomes she had seen at a pantomime in Avesham some years back; that his feet were hoofs, regular beetle-crushers, and his hands like legs of mutton. His personal shortcomings were nothing—simply nothing—in an earl, however disagreeable they might have been in a plain mister.

"May I, aw, take a squaw?" he inquired.

"Oh, yes."

"Thanks, verwy much," inscribing his name opposite a set of lancers, "I newaw valse."

"No. Don't you like it?"

"Not much. Wathaw a baw to wush wound and wound you know, and don't suit my head. Gives me a frightful pain thaw."

"That is very distressing," said Ruby, feeling inclined to laugh at the squat little man's affected manner.

"Verwy. Thaw awe athaw things I like bethaw."

"What are they?"

"Shooting, fishing, widing, wacing."

"Riding is a specially delightful amusement."

"Yes. Do you follow the hounds?"

"No. We don't keep any horses," she informed him.

"Weally. Now that's verwy funny. Thought people who lived in the countwy always did."

"I suppose they do if they can afford it. We can't."

"Aw! weally," putting up his eyeglass to stare at her. "Live newaw heaw?" he demanded, as he dropped it.

"Yes; the other side of Dene."

"Don't know much about the place. Staying with the Blacklands people, you know."

"Are you?"

"Yes. Know them?"

"Slightly."

"I say, may I take you into suppw? The young people awe going now. I don't want to eacort Mrs. Bevaw or that wisky widow friend of haw's."

"Yes," responded Ruby, with another smile, that disclosed her white teeth, "you may take me."

And together they proceeded to the dining-room, she not giving a thought to the fact that she had promised to let Jack take her, and passing him in the corridor without a single glance.

No, she had higher game to fly at, and accordingly flew at it; and Jack, with a pain at his heart, the first of many and many an after twinge of agony, took Opal, but was too weary and put out to notice the decorations of the room and table, which were beautiful in the extreme.

The massive gold plate of the Chicherlys was on the table and sideboard, the old engraved glass and masses of flowers—camellias from Nice and the Channel Islands, violets from Monaco, roses from Mentons, orange blossoms from Tangiers, choice blooms from many southern places, as well as from the Temple Dene conservatories.

Every imaginable delicacy was on the festive board, both common and uncommon—turkeys, fowls, swans, a peacock with outspread tail, pies, patties, sturgeon, caviare, creams, moundahs, nulwah, truffles, and a variety of splendid fruit—English hothouse grapes, American apples, Spanish melons, lychees from China, grandillos, pimentoes, and gigantic chestnuts from Naples, pines and bananas from Madeira, Jersey pears, and West Indian pomeloes, along with many other things, the produce of far countries.

"Isn't it grand, sis?" whispered Billie, with eyes round with wonder. "What's that bird with all the feathers?"

"A peacock."

"May I have a bit?"

"Of course you may," said Spragg, who, as usual, was hovering near Opal, "and anything else you like."

"It's Opal, I'm sure," said Vane to himself, as he handed Lady Dorothy a slice of pine.

"What a misfortune she will never give up that fellow Chicherly! Nothing will induce her to do that; at least, no fair means; and I shall miss all the good things I am sure the American would bestow as son-in-law. Had it been Ruby all would have gone well. She would not have said him nay. Just my luck! I always escape good fortune by the hundredth part of an inch. Confound that sailor fellow and his love-making! I wish he was at the bottom of the sea."

And with this charitable wish in his heart he went on with his supper, and helped himself to a pomeloe.

"This fellah knows how to entawtain," drawled the Earl, looking down the length of the table, with its load of lovely, bright-coloured blossoms.

"Yes; everything is done in good style."

"Fiwat wate; newaw saw it done bethaw, even amongst the uppaw ten," declared the noble Augustus.

"You see he is so wealthy. Money is no object to him."

"Exactly; and this is the result."

"A charming one. It must be delightful to be rich!" sighed Ruby.

"Do you wish you waw?" asked her companion.

"I do, indeed," with another sigh, longer and deeper.

"Aw! well, shouldn't be sawpwised if you waw wich one day, you know," remarked his lordship, a new expression shining in his green eyes as he gazed at her, the light falling full on her thick lashes, that made such a dark line as they rested on the soft crimson cheek.

#### CHAPTER XIV.

FROM the day of the fête Mr. Spragg's social success was firmly secured in the county. He became in a way the fashion, and the great people vied with each other in being civil to him, and giving entertainments in his honor. He was courted, and flattered, and made much of in such a way that it would have turned the heads of most men; but this Yankee's uncommonly ugly head was uncommonly firmly placed on his shoulders, and the adulation of the blue-blooded aristocrats affected him little, if at all.

He was grateful for the hospitality they showed, grateful that they had received him on a footing of equality—as an equal, nothing more. If the titled mothers of *passé* maidens, or portionless girls, thought he would respond more warmly to their civilities, and offer to endow one of their offspring with his vast fortune, they were mistaken. He made no such signs, and the Avesham and Dene "mammaes" waited in vain for the fruition of their hopes.

There was only one cloud on the sky of his successful horizon, and this was the persistent and unvarying coldness with which Miss Vane treated him. Do what he would, try hard as he might, he could not alter it. She was always gentle and polite to him, yet through her gentleness ran a vein of ice, an intangible something, that chilled him when he approached her, and checked him from rapidly developing, as he wished to do, into a declared admirer and lover. The coldness of the daughter, however, was in a measure balanced by the warmth of the father. Mr. Vane had quite shaken off his old habits and ways of seclusion, and was to be seen almost every day at Temple Dene, or driving or riding with the American.

This close friendship was productive of many things pleasing to him—many good dinners, a first-rate mount whenever he desired it, a carriage at his disposal at any moment he wished to send for it, besides minor blessings in the shape of dozens of wine sent to the Rest, baskets of fruit, boxes of choice cigars, hampers of game, &c., and other things that made a difference in the arrangements of the *menage*.

It was like a glimpse of paradise to this man who was a Sybarite by nature, and who had known how bitter, how terribly bitter, poverty is; and his mind was busy revolving,

not one, but many plans by which he might be able to permanently secure the pleasures he enjoyed, and for which he would almost have bartered his soul, and for which he would certainly have bartered that of anybody else could he have done so—one of his children's, for instance; their souls were not marketable, though their bodies were, and he meant to make the most of his daughters' handsome faces.

Still, though Mr. Spragg was constantly at the Rest, and always pressing Opal and Ruby to come to Temple Dene, he said no word that would justify Copeland Vane in asking his intentions, or what he meant by the presents he sent, and the attentions he paid, about equally to both girls; for Ruby, being extremely affable to him, came in for a fair share of his attentions and presents.

The fact was, Washington C. Spragg, Esq., for the first time in his prosaic, dun-coloured life was in love, truly and deeply, and he had some romantic notion that he might in time win the gentle object of his affections to care for him for himself, and not just because he possessed plenty of greenbacks and dollars.

He did not think she would ever adore him passionately; he was sensible enough to know that was out of the question.

Still he hoped after a while, when she knew him well, that if he asked her to be his wife she would say "yes," having a feeling for him that would be sufficiently tender to enable them to jog pleasantly over any matrimonial hedges and ditches they might encounter, and that would make becoming mistress of Temple Dene anything but a trial to her.

He knew this would take time; he must be in no hurry, so he gave no very tangible outward sign of his intentions, and breathed not a single word to Vane.

He did not wish for a rebuff, and he was not sure that success would ultimately crown his efforts; he did not quite understand her manner. She sometimes wore a dreamy, far-away look that puzzled him, as he knew nothing of her engagement, and he could not tell that she was thinking of Paul, of the bonnie sailor lad she loved so well.

Then she did not take the same interest in many little things that most young ladies do. She was not anxious about dress, nor eager for balls or entertainments. She seemed indifferent to her great personal attractions, and cared not at all for the admiration of the other sex, appearing rather to shrink from it.

Altogether he saw she was a girl of a different calibre from those generally met with in society, and would require different treatment. She would not marry for money, of that he was certain. His vast fortune would never attract her. If he could not win her liking he would never get her at all. So he set himself to win that, patiently, quietly, little guessing the barrier between them—the barrier of another, first in the field, and now in possession.

To Opal the constant presence of the American was at first a slight annoyance; but after a while she became accustomed to it, and took hardly any notice of it. He was so quiet, so unobtrusive, and yet so kind and useful to them, never missing an opportunity of serving them if he could, that after a while she almost forgot to shudder when she met his eye, and when she did think of him, classed him as a good-natured, kind-hearted man.

It did not occur to her, though it did to nearly everyone at the Rest, that she was the chief object of his visits. Her mind was too full of Paul. She had hardly a thought to spare for any other man.

She lived chiefly in a dream-world, and her world was peopled with but one person, and that was her lover. She went over and over again the last days they had spent together, repeated to herself what he had said, dwelt on how he had looked, walked in the places they had visited together, and read and re-read his letters, which came too seldom to please her.

But he was cruising about, and not able to send them very often. When they did come, though, their tenderness and length made up for all shortcomings, and filled her heart with a rare joy, that made her careless of all ills and trials; for had she not the future to look forward to—that future that loomed so brightly in the far distance, and which would be spent with him?

Ruby, on the other hand, was very much alive to the troubles of everyday life, having nothing to lift her out of them; for Lord Mount Severn had left Blacklands and returned to town, after one or two visits to the white stone, thatched-roof house, without saying a word that meant anything; and Jack Rainham was doing duty for an overworked clerical friend in an east-end London parish; while the mummy, she knew, did not come to see her.

Then she was worried over money matters, and found it almost impossible to make both ends meet. True, Temple Dene supplied them with fruit and game, but then it is quite impossible to live entirely on hares and pheasants, grapes and peaches, notwithstanding that they are delicacies. And they got little else, as Mr. Vane, on the strength of his friendship with the millionaire, had gone up to town and ordered an expensive suit or two of clothes, and indulged in a few costly trifles, such as pins, links, &c. These he had been obliged to pay for within three months, and his extravagance had left them penniless and dipped them deeper in debt to the few tradespeople of Dene who served them.

"I don't know what to do," groaned Ruby, pushing back the heavy masses of hair from her temples with a weary gesture, as she sat one morning in the "den" over her account books.

"Why? What is the matter?" inquired Opal, looking up with a happy smile upon her lips from the perusal of Paul's last letter, received a few moments before.

"The matter is that we have no money," replied the Duchess, despondently; "nothing to eat in the house save a brace of partridges and a barrel of apples, and I don't know what to do for dad's dinner. We haven't a potato or a piece of bread."

"Shall I go and order some?" suggested Miss Vane, innocently and sweetly.

"You can go and order them if you like, my dear, but they won't be sent."

"Why not?"

"Baker has refused to supply anything more till all or part of his bill is settled."

"Ruby, you don't mean that."

"There is his charming epistle," tossing a blue sheet of paper across the table.

"How much do we owe him?"

"Nearly thirty pounds."

"Good heavens! We shall never be able to settle that."

"Not unless some good fairy appears and helps us."

"It is very awkward."

"More than awkward—it means that starvation stares us in the face. Here is the contents of my purse," and she emptied out three pennies and two farthings.

"Father must give some."

"Father hasn't anything to give. His little jaunt to town, his visit to the opera, those smart new clothes, have swallowed up all the housekeeping money for the next three months. He will be elegantly and stylishly clothed, able to dine with the mummy whenever he is asked, and we shall starve," said Ruby, with exceeding bitterness.

"What can we do?"

"I don't know, and the bill for the boys' schooling will be in next week. Bad as it is, they will have to be taken away."

"Oh, no."

"Oh, yes. Burgess won't teach them for nothing. Then Billie is to have beef tea. The doctor says his strength wants keeping up. How am I to get that?"

"I—I—have—an idea—that perhaps may answer."

"What is that?"

"I shall write to aunt."

"Dad may not like that."

"I cannot help that," replied Opal, firmly, her fears for her delicate, dearly-beloved little brother aroused. "Billie must have nourishment," and sitting down she dashed off a letter to Lady Dorothy, who was spending Christmas at Blacklands, and sent Blackie over with it.

(To be continued.)

## FACETIE.

"NOTHING new under the sun, eh?" exclaimed old Uncle Skeelz, as he laid down his book of adages. "Why, what was that queer critter I saw at the menagerie—that hose with horns? Wasn't that something gnu?"

"Pa," said a little girl, "why do people call the pleasant spell of weather in the autumn the Indian summer?" "Why, my dear, I—I—suppose it's because that's about the only thing the Indians have left."

THE French Ambassador paid a neat compliment, a little while back, to a lady who had been talking to him for an hour. The lady said: "You must think I am very fond of the sound of my own voice." The Frenchman replied: "I knew you liked music."

A LITTLE BIT OF CONSIDERATION.—A doctor in Ireland was disturbed one night by a rapping on the door, and, opening it, found a labouring man who had come for him. "Have you been here long?" said the doctor. "Indeed, I have," answered the man. "But why didn't you ring the night-bell?" "Och! because I was afraid of disturbin' your honour."

"Will ye tell me, doctor dear, for certain, whether I'll get well again or no?" "Oh yes; I think you'll be all right soon now," was the answer. "I wanted to know for sure, ye see, doctor, because I'm a lone woman, an' I subscribe to a buryin' society, an' I just wish to know if I was likely to be gettin' any benefit out of it or not."

Two young married French ladies were talking about their husbands. Said one of them: "Do you really think your Jules went shooting yesterday?" "Well, I don't think he tried to deceive me yesterday; I am inclined to think he went." "But he didn't bring back any game?" "That's what makes me feel sure he did go," was the wife's reply. "When he only pretends to go, he always buys a lot of game to bring home with him."

HANDY IN CASE OF FIRE.—A young tenor singer obtained a hearing before the manager of a theatre. He sang; but the manager stopped him at the end of three or four notes. "Leave me your address," he said, "and I will think of you if it should happen." "What do you mean by 'if it should happen'?" demanded the young tenor. "Why, if my theatre should catch fire—" "Well?" "I should engage you to cry 'Fire!'"

HUSBAND (to his middle-aged wife, who has just come in from shopping): "The census taker was in, dear. He demanded the age of each of the family, and I was obliged to give him yours. He said it was the law. Wife (enraged): Law! What do I care for law. John Smith; did you tell that man my age?" Husband (hurriedly): "Yes, I told him you were twenty-three." Wife (mollified): "Well, I suppose the law has got to be respected."

A SMART LITTLE BOY.—A city toiler and his little son met a sturdy farmer in the country, whereupon the toiler remarked: "That's a fine field of oats you have there!" "Don't you know the difference between oats and wheat?" asked the sturdy farmer, contemptuously. "No, I don't." "I thought every donkey knew that!" exclaimed the rustic. "You see, father," said the toiler's little boy, who had not taken any part in the debate, "if every donkey knows the difference, it's lucky you said you didn't!"



## SOCIETY.

**THE PRINCE OF WALES AT NICE.**—The first grand procession of cars in the Nice Carnival recently took place, and the Battle of the Confetti excited much amusement among the crowds of excursionists from Paris and the country people. The Prince of Wales, who had paid a brief visit to Nice on his way from Monte Carlo, went over again from Cannes for the Battle of Flowers, and, in the company of Lady de Grey and Lady de Clifford, Viscount de Saint Priest, and Colonel Clarke, drove up and down the Promenade des Anglais for a couple of hours, exchanging bouquets with the gaily-dressed people, who were pelting each other literally with arms full of choice flowers. A perfect shower of bouquets was thrown into the carriage in which his Royal Highness was seated, with the Grand Duchess of Mecklenburg and Lord Cairns. Prince Hermann of Saxe-Weimar, who is on a visit to his brother-in-law the King of Württemberg, also took an active part in the floral fray; as did the Duke of Leuchtenburg and the children of the Grand Duke Vladimir of Russia.

PRINCE ALBERT VICTOR will visit North Wales during the coming summer, and will take the opportunity of being present at the National Eisteddfod, to be held at Carnarvon.

THE EARL OF EGLINTON, who about two months ago left for the South of Europe in order to recruit his health, and escape the rigour of a Scotch winter, has found it desirable to seek the still more genial climate of Algiers.

THE appointment of the Duke of Connaught to the honorary colonelcy of the Royal East Kent Mounted Rifles has given the greatest satisfaction to the members of that distinguished regiment.

THE QUEEN OF ITALY has just given an extensive order for poplin dresses to a firm in Dublin; these consist of all shades of colours, besides white, and one of cream colour, embroidered with shamrocks.

THE DUCHESS OF ALBANY is not expected to remain on the Continent more than three weeks, as she purposed being at Windsor Castle on the anniversary of her husband's death, the 28th ult. Her Royal Highness may go later on with her children to visit her parents at Arosen.

THE EMPEROR OF GERMANY, besides his recent accident and cold, has been suffering much anxiety in consequence of the dangerous illness of his grandson, the Hereditary Grand Duke of Baden, who has been dangerously ill with rheumatic fever of a complicated kind. The most recent accounts are of a more favourable nature.

GREAT preparations are being made at the Palace of San Antonio, Malta, for the reception of the Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh. These are on such an extensive scale, that there is evidently an idea of their Royal Highnesses settling there with their family, or at least as long as the Duke is in command of the Mediterranean Fleet.

THE CZAR is becoming daily thinner and thinner under the influence of the Banting system, which is prescribed to his Majesty by his physician, Dr. Schwenninger.

THE anniversary banquet of the Highland Society of London took place on the 22nd ult. at the Freemasons' Tavern, and was honoured by the presence of the Duke of Connaught and other distinguished guests. His Royal Highness will also preside at a festival dinner to be held on the 5th of May in aid of the funds of the Work Girls' Protection Society, New Kent Road.

PRINCESS CHRISTIAN again recently visited the Windsor Guildhall, and assisted in serving the free dinner provided for children of the poor of the Royal borough.

## STATISTICS.

**THE ELECTORS OF THE UNITED KINGDOM.**—A return has been issued showing with regard to each Parliamentary constituency in the United Kingdom the number of electors on the register now in force. In England and Wales there are 2,536,580 in the counties; 1,840,644 in the boroughs, and 14,636 in the Universities. In Scotland there are 325,529 in the counties, 235,051 in the burghs, and 13,778 in the Universities. In Ireland there are 631,649 in the counties, 106,109 in the boroughs, and 4,155 in Dublin University.

**THE NATIONAL DEBT.**—A return has been issued of the National Debt for each year from 1857-8 to 1884-5 inclusive. In the former year the total national debt was £837,144,897; but this was reduced in the same year to £831,532,535, and was further increased in the succeeding year to 1862-3, when it was increased by £245,647. Further reductions were made down to 1875-6, when the debt was increased by £1,960,926, and again in 1877-8 it was increased by £2,137,002, and in 1878-9 by £813,337, since when the debt has been substantially decreased each year. In 1884-5 the debt stood at £746,423,964, and this was increased by exchequer bills and conversions of stock by £1,515,604; but there was paid off £7,008,914, and thus there was a decrease of £6,093,310, leaving the total debt funded at the present time at £740,330,654.

## GEMS.

WEAKNESS is more opposed to virtue than vice is.

PEOPLE addicted to secrecy are so without knowing why; they are not so for cause, but for secrecy's sake.

WHAT stubbling, ploughing, digging and harrowing are to land—thinking, reflecting, and examining are to the mind.

BUT if you are going to be a fool just because other men have been, oh, my son, what a hopeless fool you will be.

HE who waits for an opportunity to do much at once may breathe out his life in idle wishes, and regret in the last hour his useless intentions and barren zeal.

THIS is a good rule in every journey to provide some piece of liberal study to rescue the hours which bad weather, bad company and taverns steal from the best economist.

## HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

**TO WARM OVER COLD BEEF.**—A dish which is liked by the hungry and the hearty is made in this way: Take some thin slices of cold roast beef, brown them in butter, warm some cold boiled potatoes which you have chopped fine and seasoned well. Heat also cold boiled cabbage, chopped fine. When these are all hot, place a layer of meat in a warm vegetable-dish, then a layer of the potato, then of the beef, then of the cabbage, and so on until the dish is full. Do this as speedily as possible, so as to send it hot to the table.

**BEEF STEW.**—To make an appetising beef stew take out the bone, and bind the pieces of beef tightly, putting a lemon, pared and cut in two, and some herbs in before binding. Place it in a small stewpan or kettle as will allow of its being covered with water. Let it cook slowly and gently; do not add any water unless absolutely necessary. Slice a large onion, and fry it brown, and add to the water also any sliced vegetables you choose, or cook the vegetables in a kettle by themselves, and serve on the platter with the beef. If you do not add any water you will have a very rich gravy, and a portion of it may be reserved for soup stock.

## MISCELLANEOUS.

CONSISTENCY is an acquired habit, and of slow growth. The conditions necessary for its acquisition are right and fixed principles of faith and morals, sincerity, simplicity, singleness of aim, contentment, high temper enough not to be tripped with, honest pride, temperance, and fortitude.

PHYSICAL health is not a final end in itself, but a very important means to the development of character and life. It is our duty to seek health and to prize it, not only for its own sake, but for the possibilities it opens up to us of expanding into a higher manhood than any in its power to bestow.

LEADERSHIP is one thing and dominancy another. It is well, if we have not the qualities of leadership, to be willing to be led; but to have our minds dominated, and controlled is another and entirely different thing. The important lesson to impart to children is that of sound independent thought. And, if it lead to strong-mindedness—that is, tenacity of opinion—it will be well, provided opinions be carefully and thoughtfully formed.

SHOW.—There are women who will spend lavishly for show and screw down the wages of servants and workpeople to the lowest possible point, who will be affable and courteous in the parlour and rude and unfeeling in the kitchen or nursery. The type of character which can thus oppress and insult those who have no means of redress, and from whom there is no hope of gain or fear of loss, is essentially mean, dishonourable, and low.

THE lukewarm and those who do not work sincerely and humbly will be rejected of God. I desire that all my brethren should labour at useful occupations, that we may be less a burden to the people, also that we may be less subject to maladies of the heart and tongue, and may not be tempted to evil thoughts or evil speaking. Those who cannot work, let them learn to work.

TO WIVES.—Exert yourself to merit and win your husband's confidence, which you will infallibly do if you lead an exemplary life and maintain unshaken sweetness and patience amidst what may be most wounding to you. A man may have great defects, even great vices; he may have his irritable moments, when he will use words as harsh as they are unjust toward her who is the helpmate of his life. That is of little matter. If a woman is all she should be, he will respect him in spite of himself, and place full trust in her; and, notwithstanding the angry taunts in the truth of which a passionate man professes to believe at the moment of utterance, his heart will remain faithful to her, and will be likewise drawn to admire and practise virtue.

FARMS ON THE BALTIC.—A more beautiful farming country does not exist than that along the southern shore of the Baltic. No fences mark even the boundaries of the fertile farms which stretch away over the rolling hills to the distant horizon, all aglow with yellow grain. At intervals a clump of trees, often seen intensely dark against the ripe grain, shows where a farmhouse stands, and giant windmills swing their sails on the highest hilltops. The highway, a finely-built chaussee, leads straight across the country, only curving to pass through some village. Mountain ash, birch, and cherry trees border the road in an unbroken rank. In the ditches and by the roadside grow countless varieties of wild flowers—a perfect paradise for the botanist. From the highest hill the eye meets to the south a succession of grain fields. To the north, beyond the soft undulations of the cultivated hills, the Baltic shimmers in the strong sunlight, a narrow line, sharp at the horizon. The dimensions of the brick barns prove the accustomed magnitude of the harvest; the luxury of the farmers' houses tells of inherited success.

## NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

F. P. H.—It is a trade secret.

DOMA.—Not wrong, but improvement.

L. M. McL.—It is out of our province to answer school examination papers.

CORDELIA O'C.—It is the picture of an earnest, intelligent, and neatly-attired young lady. Good writing.

S. T. R. & J. V.—We regret we cannot accept your poem.

L. W. R.—Contributions received. We shall be glad to hear again. The colour of the hair is deep brown.

G. G. H.—Whiting and alcohol will give a fine polish to window-panes.

M. R.—We do not think that the change you propose would be for the better. Stick to the farm.

T. T. A.—We are unable to give the addresses of the parties named.

A. G. F.—There are several published. We cannot recommend any particular one. Any good bookseller will get it for you.

N. T.—Thanks for the suggestion. We have some such arrangements in contemplation, and shall possibly carry it out shortly.

S. S. T.—We would advise you to consult a lawyer before making an effort to establish your claim. We are unable to give the addresses requested.

A. T. F.—Your salary is the average one. It is not at all probable that you could obtain any higher compensation in this section of the country.

W. D. H.—The railway distances between the places named can be ascertained by inquiring at some local railway ticket-office or agency.

A. B. W.—"Sweet Swan of Avon" was an epithet conferred upon Shakespeare by B. N. Jenson, in some commendatory verses originally prefixed to the second folio edition of Shakespeare's works printed in 1632.

B. S. T.—India rubber will dissolve in ether, chloroform, naphtha, and petroleum, but you will not be able to mould it into the shape you fancy unless you have the various appliances used by manufacturers.

B. S.—The expression of "All the Russias" is founded on the ancient division of Russia, which comprehended the provinces of Great or Black Russia, Little or Red Russia, and White Russia.

T. T.—Not knowing your tastes and capabilities we cannot recommend any particular trade or business. For book-keeping, your penmanship is not up to the common standard.

FLORENCE W.—You had better get a solicitor to prepare the deed for you. If properly drawn it will be quite legal. It must be witnessed, and requires a stamp.

AMY F.—1. You probably refer to Cristoforo Landini or Landino. He was born in Italy in 1432, and died in 1504. He was among the chief men of learning of his time.

J. S. G.—Inquiry at several book shops in this city has failed to elicit any information concerning the volume quoted. None of them can furnish the slightest clue as to where it can be purchased.

RUBY.—Perhaps some local theatrical manager will be willing to read your dramatic productions, or furnish you with some hints concerning the most likely place to apply with a view to its disposal.

C. A. J.—Inquire at an optical instrument establishment, where the desired address may in all probability be obtained. It is very obvious that we cannot advertise business firms by inserting their addresses in this department.

GEORGE'S FIRST.—1. Hair dark brown. 2. Waist rather large, but not too large if in proportion. 3. Glycerine is not injurious. 4. Tyrosine acid applied with a camel's hair brush, but do not touch the surrounding skin. 5. Nothing improper in doing so. A very nice letter. Act with reserve, but do not repel him. Certainly thank him. 6. Fair writing. 7. The numbers are in print.

R. S. T.—To make sweetmeat dumplings, take peaches, plums, quinces, or any other sweetmeat, make a light crust, and roll a small piece of moderate thickness, and fill with the fruit in quantity to make the size of a peach dumpling. Tie each one in a dumpling cloth, drop them into hot water, and boil half an hour. When done, remove the cloth, send to table hot, and eat with cream.

ST. AUGUSTINE INQUIRER.—Your dear friend will easily guess the meaning of the following lines, and cherish your memory wherever he goes:

"I would not forget thee; thine image still lingers,  
And blesses my heart in its devoted hours,  
Like an orison breathed in the calm hush of evening,  
And like dew that refreshes the withering flowers."

E. L. E. R.—There is some doubt as to the invention of the marble's compass. Dr. Gilbert, for instance, who wrote an elaborate Latin dissertation on the properties of the lodestone, was of opinion that the knowledge of its use was brought from the Chinese. Orosius, in his Discourse of the Acts of King Eusebius, refers it to Gama and his countrymen the Portuguese, who, as he pretends, took it from certain barbarian pirates. Orosius because thinks he has good reason to give the

honour of the discovery to his countrymen the Germans; the thirty-two points of the compass borrow their names from the Dutch in all languages. But Blondus, who is followed by Pandolfus (both Italians), gave the praise of it to Italy; telling us that about the year 1300 it was found out in Marzibo, a city of Naples. The name of the inventor of the compass is by Dubartus confidently affirmed to be Flavio. From these authorities it seems a probable conclusion that Flavio, the Melitane, was the first inventor of the guiding of a ship by the needle turning to the north; but that some Dutchman afterwards added to the compass the thirty-two points of the wind, in his own language, from whence other nations have since borrowed it.

E. M. M.—1. For ordinary pimples, bathe your face in a solution of borax and water night and morning for a week or two. Half a teaspoonful of the powdered borax to a pint of water will be sufficient. 2. Rusty nail water will sometimes remove freckles of long standing.

SALINE.—Break off the ill-assorted engagement and rest satisfied with the fact that persons so totally different in their views on all subjects could hardly expect to live happily together—in fact, it would be almost a miracle if they managed to agree for a single day. Being addicted to strong drink, and generally shiftless, he would, in all probability, lead a woman a most miserable existence. Better remain single than run such a fearful risk of wrecking your future happiness.

C. H. S.—To preserve green ginger, take one pound of the ginger and put it every night and morning for ten days into fresh boiling water. After taking off all the outside skin, boil it in water until tender. Slice it moderately thin, and make a syrup of one pound of loaf sugar, and half a pint of water, with sufficient dissolved lemons to clarify. Then put in the ginger, and boil until clear. When done, put into tumblers, and as soon as cold, cover with paper dipped in brandy, the closer, and keep in a cool place.

## WOMAN'S BEAUTY.

Woman, you're beautiful, we know,  
But we help much to make you so;  
By rendering ourselves so plain  
That you shall by the contrast gain;  
Content, if your regard be won,  
To be the shadow of your sun.

You strive your beauties to increase,  
While ours we apoll for your sweet peace;  
Then our devotion, love, respect,  
Are salutary in effect,  
And better than cosmetic aid,  
Help hide the traces time has made.

We have devoted, altogether  
To your exclusive use flower, feather,  
Ribbons, silks, jewellery and lace,  
To add to yours their shining graces.

We yield you nature's hues most rare,  
Thus giving you the beauty share,  
The rich and radiant tints that wed,  
While we wear these dim, black and dead.

We've given you the sun and light,  
And kept the darkness and the night;  
But deem it joy as well as duty  
To be a background for your beauty.

G. B.

A. T. T.—To preserve limes, put them into a strong solution of salt and water for six days; then salt them down the side, and take out the pulp; then soak out the salt with clear water, changing the water often; then boil them in alum water until they are green and tender. Put them into a thin syrup, boiling hot; let them remain twenty-four hours. Next make a rich syrup of R. If a pound of sugar to one pound of fruit; add it to the other syrup; boil until thick and clear, and then add to the limes. Put them all in a jar, and seal.

W. W.—1. The Cathedral at St. Etienne in Bourges, France, is one of the most celebrated in that country. Bourges is the see of an archbishop, and has fine institutions of education and art. It is also one of the great arsenals of France, and is renowned for its school of artillery. 2. During the middle ages many councils were held in Bourges. Its principal university, founded in 1463, acquired much celebrity by the teachings of Calvin and others. It is now a lyceum. 3. The tomb of Jeanne la Bienheureuse, consort of Louis XII., is in the church of St. Pierre.

M. R.—1. "Nelle" will doubtless feel highly complimented by the following poetical offering to her charms:

"No petty passions enter in thy breast,  
Enswear thy heart and by their contact chill;  
Love has not in thy spirit stood confessed—  
Lacking its pains, thou hast not dreamed of ill.  
In time I know 'twill come, and then beware!  
Ensnaring Cupid ever assaults the fair."

2. First-class in every particular. You are doubtless aware of the fact without referring to the judgment of a stranger.

R. D. D.—An engaged woman should eschew all flirtation, although it does not follow that she is to cut herself off from all association with the opposite sex because she has chosen her future husband. In other words, she may still have gentlemen friends and acquaintances, and still be free to visit and call, but she

must always try to conduct herself in such a manner as to disarm the venomous tongue of the ubiquitous gossip. The fact that a woman has confessed her love ought to be sufficient guarantee to her lover of her faithfulness, and if he places implicit trust and confidence in such confession his heart will not be racked by the pangs of jealousy.

R. S. M.—To make tomato catsup, take half a peck of tomatoes and wash and slice them. Put them in the preserving kettle, and let them stew gently until quite soft, but do not stir them. Strain the juice through a sieve, and pour it back into the kettle. Add twenty-four cloves, half an ounce of allspice, half an ounce of mace, and salt and cayenne to your taste. Set it on the fire, and let it boil until reduced to half the original quantity. The next day strain out the spice, and to every pint of juice add half a gill of vinegar. Bottle for use.

C. M.—Alabaster is a kind of soft marble, or compact variety of sulphate of lime or gypsum, of fine texture, and usually white or semi-pallid. The word alabaster is now generally given to the gypsum kind, which is carved into vases, statuettes, boxes, and other small ornaments. Calcareous alabaster, which is firmer in grain, is for sculpturing large objects, such as chimney-pieces and columns. It is sometimes called oriental alabaster. The word comes from the Greek *alabastron*, and the stone was named from alabastron, a town in ancient Egypt, where alabaster was largely manufactured.

BEAUTY.—1. The pretty name "Emeline"—signifying energetic or industrious—may be accounted thus:—"Ere she was most admired of men who love Most regular features of that right art: Enjoyed in zenith of the sculptor's art: Love fell on such alone; but so no more! In state enthroned within the modern heart. Now queens are crowned in whom, like thee, they find Ethereal beauty both of face and mind." 2. Remarkably good for one so young.

L. W. T.—1. Weak eyes may be benefited by bathing them occasionally in a weak solution of salt and water. 2. Clipping the eyelashes sometimes improves them. 3. Javelle water is prepared by taking four pounds of sal-soda to one pound of chloride of lime in one gallon of boiling water. Put the sal-soda into a vessel over the fire and add one gallon of boiling water. Let it boil for ten or fifteen minutes, then add the chloride of lime by throwing it, free from lumps, into the soda water. When cold, pour into a jug or bottle and cork tightly.

C. H. F.—1. A piece of linen kept saturated with lemon juice and bound round the arm will in a few days so soften it as to render its extrusion very easy. 2. A solution of borax and water applied to the skin will soon allay any ordinary itching. 3. For diarrhoea, take some gentle physic. Avoid coffee and late suppers, and take a great deal of exercise. Keep the feet warm, and the head cool. 4. Take a little piece of spermaceti candle, and put it in the starch while it is boiling; if you would impart gloss to linen. 5. Javelle water will remove rust from linen cloths.

GRACE.—The conduct of the young gentleman in staring in at the window as he passes is rude enough in itself to cause your papa's anger; which, we think, would be heightened, and naturally so, were he aware that you are in the habit of meeting this prying fellow. The impudent assurance of these half-grown scoundrels is one of those nuisances that would be best treated with a good horsewhip. Draw down the blinds in future when he is likely to pass, and if he speaks to you when in the street let your papa hear of the matter.

LAURA.—It is more than a question whether you could consider yourself free when your mamma promised that you should marry the gentleman. How far were you concerned in leading the gentleman to suppose that your consent was given to the promise? It appears all went smoothly enough till the arrival of the captain. Ah, those captains! Then you engage yourself to him. Where was mamma then? And afterwards, he is informed of your first engagement, made by your mamma. The captain (with or without whiskers, we opine, equally invisible) will require an explanation. "Shall you give him one?" Certainly, a full and straightforward explanation. Having disposed of this model wooer, our correspondent puts in pithily, "But what about the first gentleman?" What, indeed! He can scarcely expect or desire you to marry him if you have always treated him so coldly. We trust it will not be a case of early pistols on his return, and that he will not incontinently go and drown himself.

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London: Published for the Proprietor, at 334, Strand by J. R. Speck; and Printed by WOODFALL and KINGS Milford Lane, Strand.

